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Environmental Assessment and Section 4(f) Evaluation

Missouri River - Craig

BR 9025 (15); Control No. 2795

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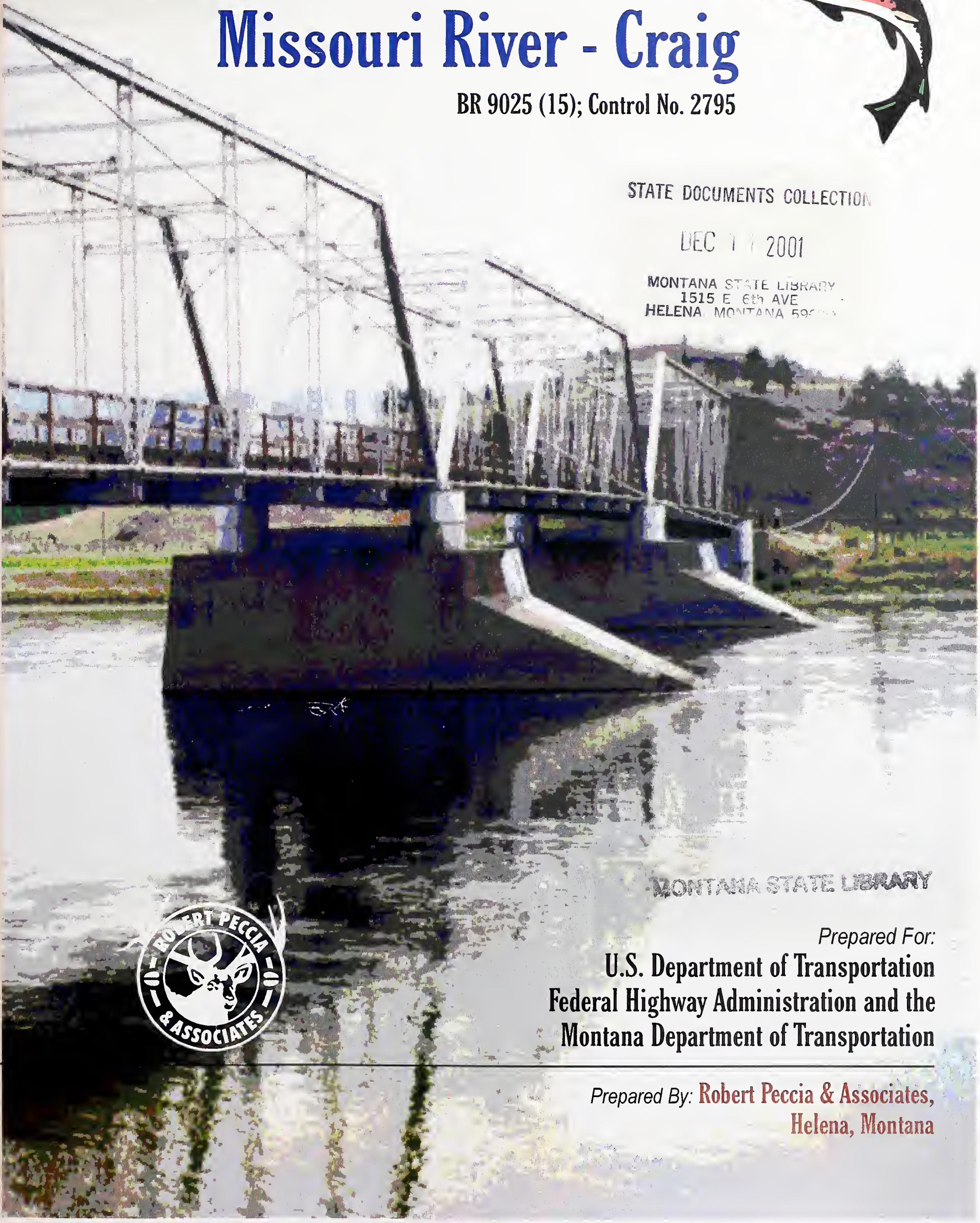

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ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
NATIONWIDE *SECTION 4(f)* EVALUATIONS

for

MISSOURI RIVER - CRAIG

MDT Project BR 9025 (15); Control No. 2795

Lewis and Clark County, Montana

This document is prepared in conformance with the *Montana Environmental Policy Act* (*MEPA)* requirements and contains the information required for an Environmental Assessment under the provisions of ARM 18.2.237(2) and 18.2.239. It is also prepared in conformance with the *National Environmental Policy Act* (*NEPA)* requirements for an Environmental Assessment under 23 CFR 771.119 and *Section 4(f)* of the *U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION Act* under 23 CFR771.135.

Submitted pursuant to:

42 U.S.C. 4332(2)(c), 49 U.S.C. 303 and

Sections 2-3-104, 75-1-201, M.C.A.

by the

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
Federal Highway Administration

and the

MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Submitted by: ______________________ Date: 8-22-01
MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
Environmental Services

Reviewed & Approved for
Distribution:
______________________ Date: 8/27/01
Federal Highway Administration

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I. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION

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I. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION

A. Project Location, Length and Termini

The MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (MDT), in cooperation with Lewis and Clark County, plans to construct a new bridge over the Missouri River at Craig. The small community of Craig is located along Interstate 15 (I-15) about 67 kilometers (km) or 42 miles north of Helena and 76 km (47 miles) south of Great Falls. The existing bridge is located immediately east of the community and is locally known as the "Craig Bridge." MDT identifies the existing bridge as Structure Number L25013000+03001. **FIGURE 1-1** shows the general location of the project area in Montana and in central Lewis and Clark County.

The Craig Bridge is located on the paved county road connecting I-15 and the old highway (or Recreation Road). I-15 generally parallels the westerly side of the Missouri River at this location and the Recreation Road (old U.S. Highway 91) generally parallels the easterly side of the river. The project limits extend from just west of the existing Burlington Northern Santa Fe railroad crossing in Craig to the Recreation Road. The total length of the proposed project is about 800 meters (m) (2,625± feet) with its final length dependent upon the exact alignment selected.

The county road linking I-15 and the Recreation Road at Craig has been identified as a "Rural Collector" according to MDT's functional classification system. The Rural Collector classification is based on the road's basic functions (travel mobility and access to property) and recognizes the character of service it provides in relation to the overall public road system. Functional classification is important consideration because it establishes the guidelines MDT uses for determining the geometric designs of highways and streets.

The Craig Bridge lies in the East½ of the NorthEast¼ of Section 10 and the West½ of the NorthWest¼ of Section 11 in Township-15-North, Range-3-West, M.P.M. A map showing the location of this bridge replacement project is shown in **FIGURE 1-2**.

From its headwaters some 129 km (80 miles) to the south, the Missouri River meanders northerly through broad valleys and steep-walled canyons before entering the narrow valley at Craig. The project area east of the Missouri River has been cultivated to produce hay and other crops for feed and forage. The western end of the project area includes the platted townsite of Craig. This area includes a mixture of developed lands and vacant lots. The Craig Fishing Access Site, a public fishing access and campground exists near the southwesterly end of the present bridge.

B. Scope and Nature of the Proposed Work

The proposed action would provide a new bridge across the Missouri River at Craig to replace the existing truss bridge. The new structure would be built both for greater safety, and to accommodate larger and/or heavier vehicle loads. The existing bridge was built in 1903 and consists of two 11.5± m (37.7± feet) long end spans and three 41.0± m (134.5± feet) long intermediate through-truss spans. The current bridge has a 4.5 m (14.8± feet) wide timber deck and a vertical (overhead) clearance of 4.4 m (14.5± feet). The existing roadway approaches are similar in width to the existing bridge. Photos of the existing bridge are shown in **PLATE 1**.

A new 170.0 m (560.0± foot) long by 11.5 m (37.7± foot) wide bridge is proposed for the Missouri River crossing at Craig. The new bridge would be constructed using pre-stressed concrete or steel beams with a cast-in-place concrete deck. The proposed bridge would be built on a new alignment at or near the existing bridge. The new bridge would likely have four spans and would be supported by end bents (abutments) on each bank and three piers within the river.

The proposed action would also construct approaches connecting the new bridge to the existing county roadway. The approaches would have a minimum width of 8.4 m (27.6± feet) and be surfaced with plant mix. The approaches would accommodate two 3.6 m (11.8± foot) wide driving lanes and a 0.6 m (2.0±foot) wide shoulder along either side. The horizontal and vertical alignment of the new approaches would depend upon the selected bridge site, the elevation of the new bridge deck, and the required transitions to existing roadway. The proposed approach construction would be done to comply with MDT's design standards for Rural Collectors.

New right-of-way would be required for the construction of the proposed project. The amount of new right-of-way required would depend upon the selected alignment. Reconstruction activities within Craig would generally be accomplished within the existing right-of-way.

The proposed project is considered to be in level terrain and its horizontal and vertical alignments would be designed to meet the requirements for a design speed of 70 km/hr (about 43.5± mph). This design speed is consistent with standards in MDT's "Road Design Manual" for Rural Collectors in level terrain and traffic characteristics like that of the project area.

Other improvements would include relocating conflicting utilities, grading, placing road base material and new pavement, installing signing and markings on the roadway, installing guardrail where warranted, revegetating disturbed areas, and reclaiming abandoned areas of the old county road. More details about the proposed improvements and alternatives considered are in Part III.

C. Project Funding

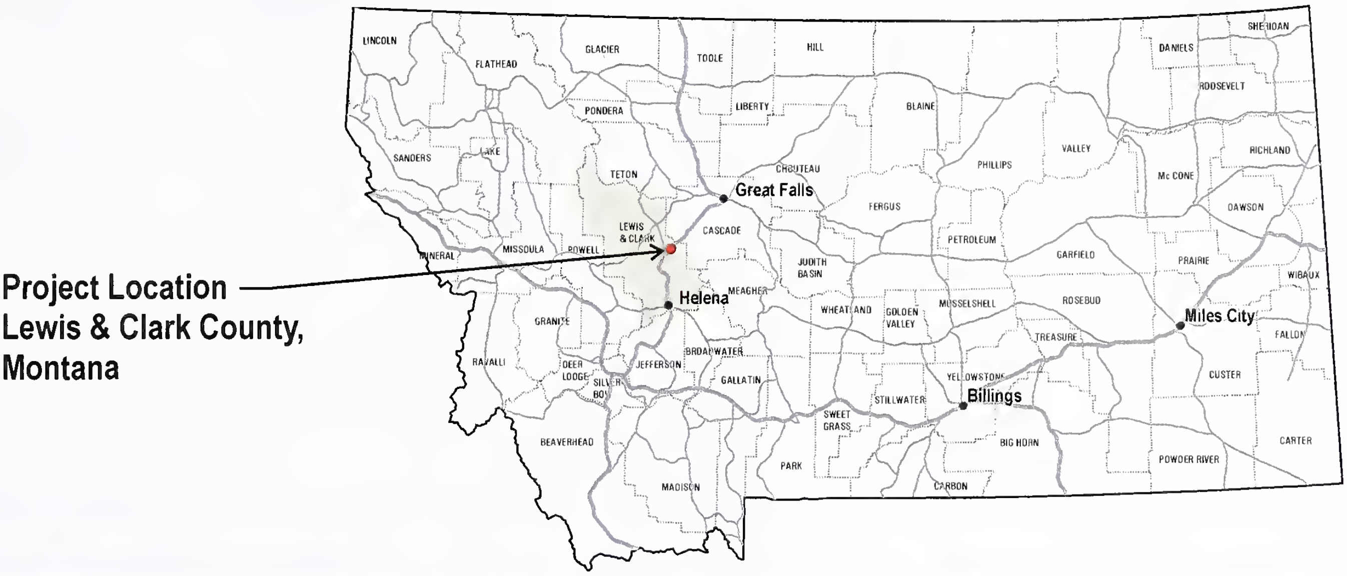
Off-system bridges (i.e. bridges not on Interstate, National Highway System, Primary, Secondary, or Urban routes) are generally owned by the counties in which they are located. MDT inspects off-system bridges as required by the FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION (FHWA) and occasionally designs and builds some county-owned structures. In this instance, Lewis and Clark County owns the Craig Bridge.

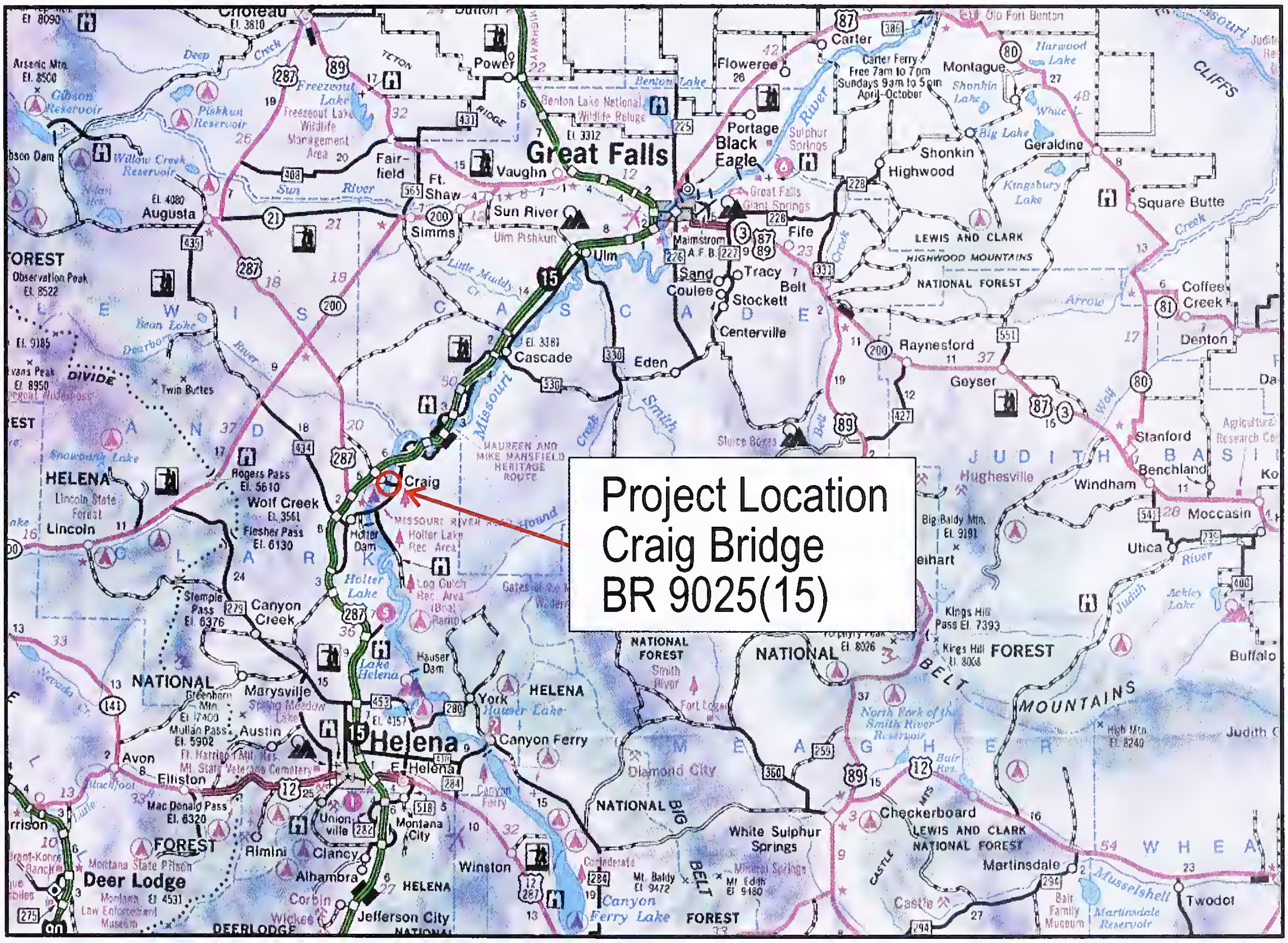
The MDT receives limited funding for bridges through the Highway Bridge Replacement and Rehabilitation Program (HBRRP) funded under the Federal Highway Trust Fund. HBRRP program funding is 80% federal with a 20% state match. Thirty-five percent of the funds allocated to the State's HBRRP, are dedicated to off-system bridges. The program allocates funds to Montana's five financial districts based on need. The funds are then distributed to counties on a priority basis. Lists are sent to counties showing which bridges are eligible for off-system funds and priorities for rehabilitation or replacement are assigned by the local government. Counties must nominate off-system bridges to be improved.

Lewis and Clark County nominated this bridge for replacement rather than rehabilitation. The County believes a new bridge is the most desirable course of action due to the continuing maintenance costs that would be associated with the existing structure and increasing traffic demands at this crossing.

D. Jurisdiction

The Craig Bridge is located on a road that is under the jurisdiction of Lewis and Clark County. The County has full maintenance responsibilities for this route including the portion located within the community of Craig. MDT has jurisdiction and maintenance responsibility for I-15 and associated entrance and exit ramps west of Craig and for the Recreation Road along the east side of the Missouri River.

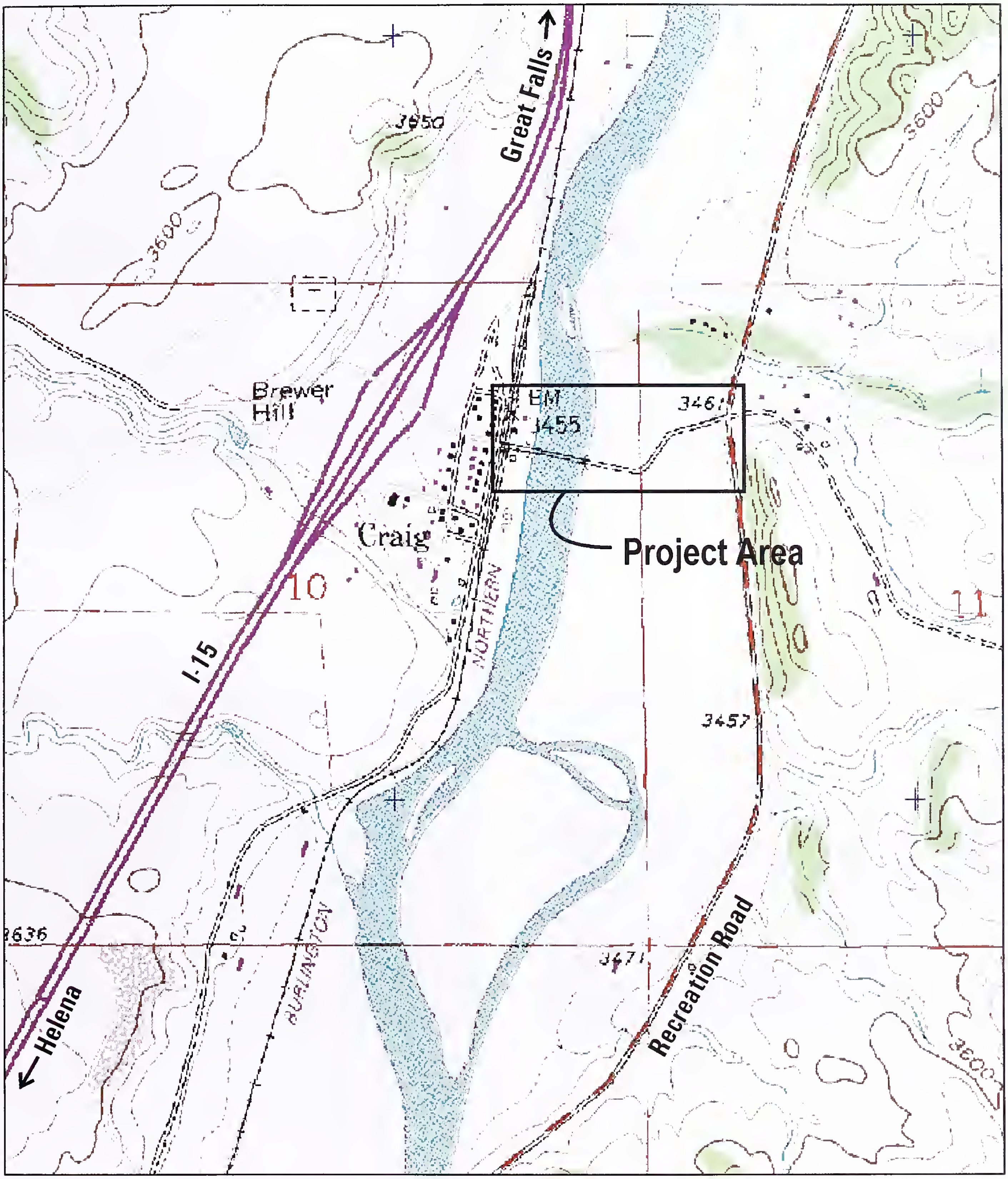




Map Not
To Scale

Missouri River - Craig

Figure 1-1
General Area Location Map



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Map Not
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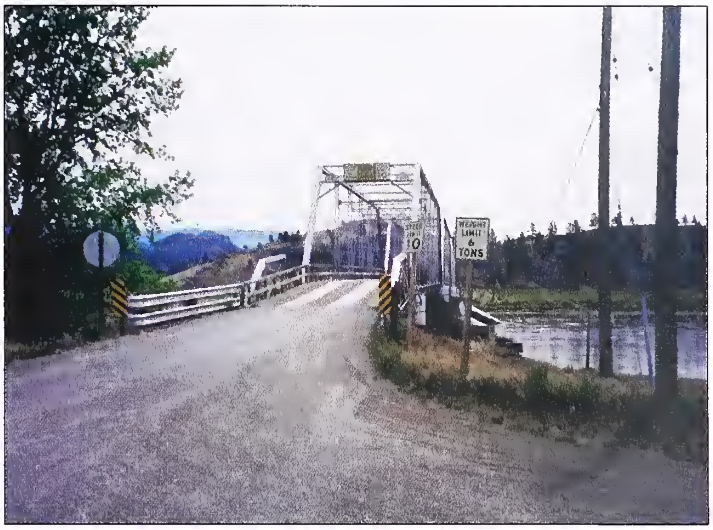
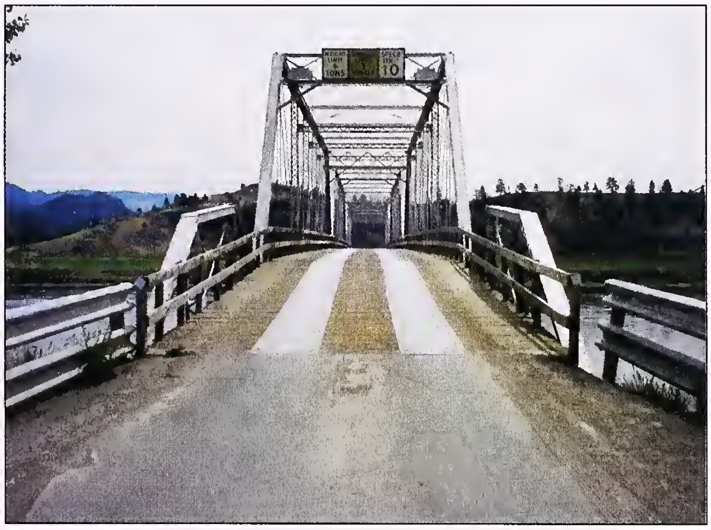
Missouri River - Craig

Figure 1-2
Project Location Map

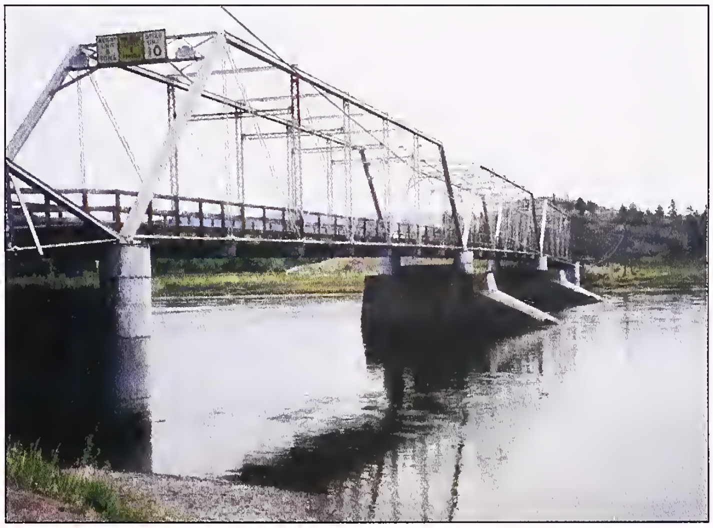
Looking easterly along Bridge Street at the existing Craig Bridge.



The present structure has overhead clearance restrictions and load limits have been implemented at the crossing.



The existing bridge has limited sight distance across the structure due to steep approaches at either end. The bridge is restricted to one-lane of travel.



The Craig Bridge was built in 1903 and consists of two short end spans and three intermediate through-truss spans.

Missouri River - Craig

**Plate 1:
Photographs of Craig Bridge**

II. PURPOSE OF AND NEED FOR THE PROJECT

II. PURPOSE of and NEED for the PROJECT

A. Background

This section of the EA discusses the purpose of the proposed bridge project at Craig and why such action is necessary. The intent of this Part is to establish why the FHWA and MDT are proposing to make a large expenditure of public funds while at the same time causing environmental impacts in the vicinity of the project. The alternatives identified in Part III were developed in response to the needs described in this Part.

This project has been proposed because Lewis and Clark County determined providing a new bridge at Craig is the best way to serve residents and the traveling public. The County believes that a new bridge is warranted because of the continued cost associated with maintaining the existing structure and the increasing traffic demands at the crossing. If the existing bridge were to fail catastrophically, the County does not have sufficient funds to implement major repairs to the Craig Bridge without neglecting equally important projects at other stream crossings within the County. A new bridge at Craig will be expensive due to the required size and complexity of the structure. The County could not pay for the new bridge without assistance from MDT and funding from the Highway Bridge Replacement and Rehabilitation Program.

The fundamental purpose of this proposed project is to replace the existing bridge with a new structure that would ensure continuing and safe travel for users of the river crossing. To accomplish this purpose, the proposed action must:

- incorporate physical changes to the roadway and bridge and their adjoining environment to increase the safety, comfort, and convenience of the traveling public;
- ensure the designs for the new bridge and its approaches comply with MDT's "Bridge Design Standards", current AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF STATE HIGHWAY TRANSPORTATION OFFICIALS (AASHTO) Standard Specifications, and design standards for Rural Collectors listed in MDT's "Road Design Manual"; and
- reduce County maintenance requirements and costs associated with the bridge and its approaches.

B. Transportation and Other Needs

This section identifies the transportation problems or concerns that exist with the current bridge or that will likely exist if the Craig Bridge is not replaced. These transportation "needs" focus primarily on deficient structural and geometric conditions associated with the bridge and its approaches and its increasing use by the traveling public. The section begins with a brief history of the proposed project and a discussion of the Craig Bridge's use.

1. Project History and Status

The Craig Bridge was constructed in 1903 by the Elkhart Bridge Company of Elkhart, Indiana at an approximate cost of $12,000. Lewis and Clark County has performed various maintenance activities on the bridge since its construction. The most recent major maintenance activity undertaken by the County was a replacement of the bridge's timber deck in the early 1990s. The cost of the deck replacement on the bridge consumed the County's entire annual bridge budget during the year in which the work was completed. The Lewis and Clark County Commissioners have identified replacing the Craig Bridge as their highest bridge priority for the last decade.

Authorization from the FHWA to begin preliminary engineering work for this project was received on March 1, 1999.

2. Current and Projected Road/Bridge Use

Current Road/Bridge Use. The Craig Bridge and the adjoining county road serve residents of the Craig town site, area ranchers, and recreational visitors traveling between I-15 and the Recreation Road. I-15, the major north-south route through west-central Montana, links Craig area residents with Helena and Great Falls. The Recreation Road, which parallels the east side of the Missouri River and Little Prickly Pear Creek through Wolf Creek Canyon, serves as a recreation and farm and ranch access road.

Recreational use of the Missouri River corridor has increased over recent years as the river has become recognized as a nationwide destination for trout fishermen and public interest has been renewed in the route traveled by the Lewis and Clark Expedition. The Missouri River corridor near Craig has been developed with numerous vacation homes and recreation sites. In addition to about 50 full-time residents, Craig's population increases notably in the summer months as seasonal residents, campers, and other recreationists visit the community. Floaters and drift fishermen exiting or entering the Missouri River at the Craig Fishing Access Site generate notable traffic volumes from spring through the fall months.

Current and Future Traffic Volumes. MDT's design traffic data for the county road at the Craig Bridge is summarized in **TABLE 2-1**.

Table 2-1: Current and Future Traffic at the Craig Bridge

1999 Average Daily Traffic (ADT)	720 (Vehicles per day)
2002 ADT	780 (Vehicles per day)
2022 ADT	1,360 (Vehicles per day)
Design Hourly Volume (DHV)	140 (Vehicles per hour)
Directional Distribution	50-50%
Percent Trucks	6.0%
All Trucks	58.6%
18 kip Equivalent Single Axle Loads (EASLs)	29.36 -- Daily

As **TABLE 2-1** shows, the Average Daily Traffic (ADT) volume on the county road at Craig is anticipated to grow substantially over the next twenty years. MDT's planners predict that ADT volumes may increase from a current level of about 780 vehicles per day to about 1,360 vehicles per day by the year 2022. MDT projects traffic volumes at the Missouri River crossing will continue to grow at a rate of about 2.8 percent per year over the foreseeable future.

3. Deficiencies of the Existing Bridge

The Craig Bridge is a 97-year-old steel through-truss structure that MDT considers to be structurally deficient and functionally obsolete based on its Sufficiency Rating. The Sufficiency Rating is a composite of several ratings of individual bridge items that are used to assess the structural condition and geometry of bridges. A bridge with a low rating on structural items will be designated as "structurally deficient" and a bridge with a poor rating for geometry items will be designated as "functionally obsolete." New bridges usually have Sufficiency Ratings of 95 or more. The Craig Bridge had a Sufficiency Rating of only 28.9 on a 100-point scale based on its most recent condition evaluation review.

Although the present structure has been well maintained by the County, the bridge has a number of conditions that are of concern to MDT and the County. Based on a recent inspection of the structure by MDT, weathered and loose railings and loose steel decking were observed. Some supporting members in the end spans (stringers) had deep checks in the timber. Some rollers were exposed and movement and twisting was apparent on truss sections. Concrete deterioration exists on both abutments and on the upstream side of all bridge piers. Erosion was also apparent at the corners of the east abutment at the time of MDT's last inspection. The Structural Inventory and Appraisal form found in **APPENDIX C** documents deficient conditions at the Craig Bridge.

The primary deficiencies of the bridge (and the reasons why the bridge is proposed for replacement) are described below.

- The existing bridge currently has a posted load limit of 5.3± metric tons (6 tons) for a type 3 truck, and any larger-than-normal truck loads cannot safely cross this bridge. This inconveniences road users and local residents and may in some extreme cases (i.e.: the need for emergency services) puts lives and property at risk.

- The existing structure does not meet MDT's optimal width for (two-lane) Rural Collector roadways, and serves just one lane of traffic. The existing bridge's deck is only 4.5 m (14.8± feet) wide. MDT's normal minimum width for a two-lane bridge is 8.4 m (27.6± feet), sufficient to provide two 3.6 m (11.8± foot) wide driving lanes and two 0.6 m (2.0± foot) shoulders on the bridge deck. The proposed bridge would have a minimum width of 9.6 m (31.5± feet).

  MDT has proposed building a 9.6 m (31.5± feet) wide bridge instead of the minimum width for a two-lane bridge (8.4 m or 27.6± feet) due to the anticipated future traffic volumes at this crossing. The current ADT is approaching the upper limit of the traffic volume criterion MDT follows to determine if an 8.4 m (27.6± feet) wide or wider bridge is appropriate for a given crossing location. The forecasted design year ADT indicates that a 9.6 m (31.5± feet) wide bridge would better serve the future users of this crossing.

- The existing bridge has a vertical clearance of 4.4 m (14.4± feet). Low overhead members on the existing bridge severely limit the height of vehicles that can cross the structure.

- The deck of the existing bridge is elevated above its approaches. This condition severely restricts the line of sight across the structure. Motorists waiting to cross the bridge cannot readily see vehicles that are on or about to cross the structure. At times some motorists may be required to back down the steep approaches at either bridge end to avoid a conflict with a crossing vehicle. The restricted visibility across the bridge, combined with its narrow deck, has dictated that the County limit use of the bridge to one vehicle at a time and post a speed limit of 16 kilometers per hour (km/h) or 10 miles per hour on the structure. None of these conditions are consistent with driving conditions on roads that adjoin either side of the present crossing.

These bridge deficiencies are the principal reasons why Lewis and Clark County nominated the Craig bridge for replacement.

4. Approach Roadway Deficiencies

The major deficiency with the existing approaches to the bridge is deficient roadway width. The existing county road approaches to the Craig Bridge are typically only 6.7 m (22.0± feet) wide. MDT has established that 70 km/h (43.5±mph) is the appropriate design speed given the flat terrain of the project area and projected future traffic characteristics of the county road. Controlling geometric standards for a 70 km/h design are identified in *Figure 12-5: Geometric Design Criteria for Rural Collector Roads* in MDT's "Road Design Manual." According to the manual, the approaches to the bridge should be a minimum width of 8.4 m (27.6± feet).

The east approach to the Craig Bridge consists of a tangent (straight) section of roadway and a long reverse curve prior to the road's connection to the Recreation Road.

5. Traffic Safety and Efficiency

MDT's accident analysis showed that only one accident was recorded on the Craig Bridge between 1989 and 1998. The accident involved a vehicle rolling backwards into another vehicle while waiting for opposing traffic to cross the bridge. Even though the accident history at the crossing is not significant, the limited driver visibility across the bridge and the potential for vehicle conflicts on this narrow bridge with restricted overhead clearance are conditions that could contribute to accidents at this location.

Building a new bridge with a 9.6 m (31.5± feet) driving surface and no overhead clearance restrictions would provide a safer facility for road users. The new bridge would eliminate potential conflicts caused by vehicles meeting on the structure and by taller than normal vehicles traveling across the bridge.

A new bridge would also provide a substantial improvement in overall public safety. The load restrictions imposed on the current bridge forces oversize and overweight emergency vehicles to use alternate routes that may increase emergency response times. Providing a new bridge would help reduce emergency response times and decrease the risk to life and/or property.

Another result of the proposed bridge replacement would be a more efficient facility for road users. The new bridge would be designed according to AASHTO standards and would safely carry all legal loads. The restricted load capacities of the present structure or the potential closure of the bridge due to a structural failure, would lengthen driving times and distances if the traveling public must use alternate routes to cross the Missouri River.

Other river crossings for oversize and overweight vehicles that would avoid the restricted crossing at Craig are located north of Craig or at Wolf Creek and can be accessed via I-15. The I-15 Dearborn exit is located about 9.6 km (6± miles) north of Craig and the Wolf Creek exit on I-15 is about 16 km (10± miles) south of the community. Depending upon which alternate crossing were used, motorists would be required to travel an additional 19 to 33 km (12 to 21 miles) to get around the restricted river crossing at Craig.

The existing bridge does not have defined provisions for pedestrians and bicyclists. Currently, these facility users must share the deck of the existing bridge with the vehicles while crossing the structure and are vulnerable to collisions.

C. Overall Conclusions on Need

The existing bridge and its approaches have physical deficiencies that contribute to reduced safety for users of this county road. Most of these deficiencies are related to the design of the bridge and roadway and can be corrected only through reconstruction. Reconstructing this river crossing would substantially improve road safety by providing a new structure capable of accommodating all legal loads and, for the first time, simultaneous two-way traffic. The new bridge provided by this proposed project would not have overhead clearance limitations and would have a significantly increased load carrying capacity. A new structure would also eliminate the County's present financial burden of continuing to maintain a century-old bridge.

If the bridge were not replaced, the potential exists for the structure to eventually collapse due to its age and deterioration. The old structure would have to be removed and replaced with a new bridge or the crossing at Craig would have to be abandoned. In either event, losing the ability to cross the river at Craig would inhibit traffic flows in and through the area and cause severe economic hardships to local businesses.

III. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

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A. Introduction

This Part describes the alternatives considered to address the transportation and other needs for the Craig Bridge project area identified in Part II. Alternatives to the proposed action are the various activities to be undertaken to meet the purpose and the need (or the reasons for implementing the project). The text that follows discusses the range of alternatives initially considered, identifies a Preferred Action, and discloses why one alternative is preferred to the others considered for the proposed bridge replacement project. The "Preferred Action" is the alternative which MDT believes would best meet the purpose and need for the project, giving consideration to economic, environmental, technical and other factors.

B. Alternatives Considered

Alternatives initially considered for the proposed action were the No Action Alternative, abandoning the existing crossing, rehabilitating the existing bridge, and Build Alternatives including several options for the location and design of a new bridge at Craig. These alternatives are described below:

1. The No Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative involves no work to improve or correct existing deficiencies at the Craig Bridge. This alternative would not change the existing bridge or its approaches; however, the roadway and structure would continue to receive the actions needed to maintain the facilities for public use. County funds would be obligated in the future to defray the costs associated with continued maintenance activities.

The only direct costs of this alternative are those associated with maintenance actions. There would be no new impacts on adjacent residential or commercial uses in Craig or agricultural land uses east of the crossing due to the acquisition of new right-of-way and the realignment of the existing roadway approaches. Similarly, there would be no new effects on the Craig Fishing Access Site located near the southwest end of the existing road. The No Action Alternative would not change the visual appearance of the project area or affect habitat for wildlife and fish adjacent to or in the Missouri River. **FIGURE 3-1** shows the existing Craig Bridge.

The bridge would continue to serve only one vehicle at a time due to its load limitations and inhibited line of sight across the structure. Vehicles taller than 4.4 m (14.5± feet) would continue to be restricted from using the structure.

2. Abandon the Existing Bridge and River Crossing

This alternative would close the existing bridge and assumes no other bridge would be constructed across the Missouri River at Craig. Neither the County nor MDT would undertake further actions to maintain or improve the structure. Since the structure would not be available for use, the public could no longer travel between I-15 and the Recreation Road via the existing county road. The project area would continue to be accessible by roads from either side of the Missouri River. The lack of a crossing at Craig would change the primary function of the existing county road from accommodating local and recreational travel through the area to just providing local access to residences, the Craig FAS, recreation sites along the Missouri River, and agricultural lands in the project area.

This alternative does not involve construction and would not cause new impacts on the adjacent lands or the Missouri River in the project area. Local residents and visitors would be required to use an alternate crossing site either upstream or downstream for travel through this part of Lewis and Clark County.

If the existing bridge were closed and remained in place, the structure would continue to be a liability to the County unless another entity adopted the historic bridge. Unless others adopted the Craig Bridge in place, the County would be forced to determine whether removing the structure or allowing the bridge to remain and be used for other purposes (e.g. pedestrian and non-motorized travel, historic preservation) would be the most prudent course of action. If no alternate use for the bridge were identified, the County would be obligated to remove the structure before its condition deteriorated to a level where it posed a hazard to the public. Removing the structure would likely cause minor and temporary impacts on the Missouri River and adjacent lands.

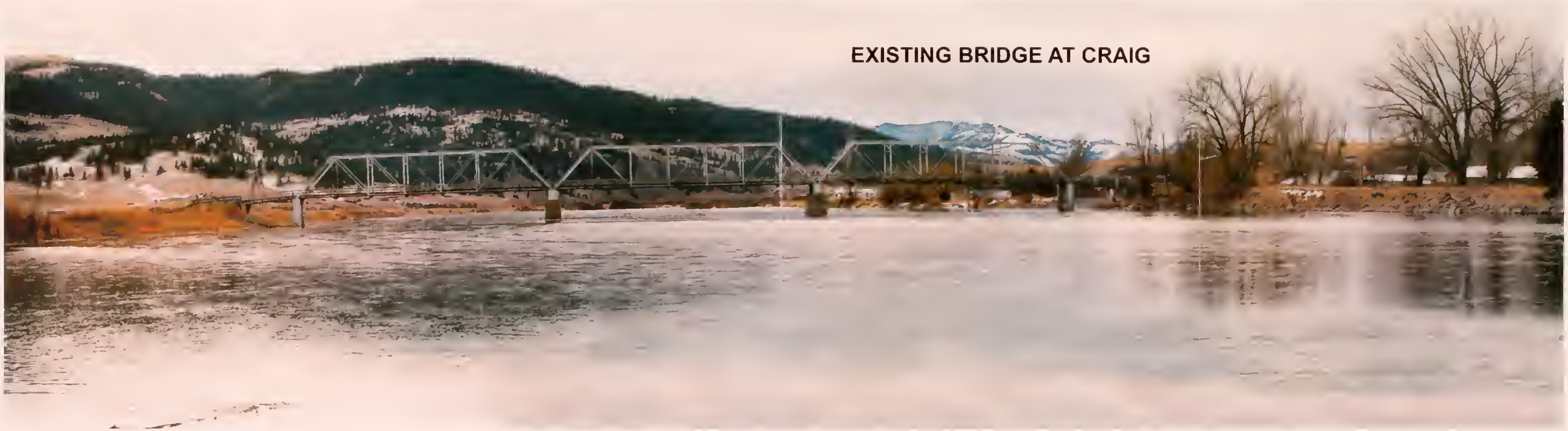
3. Rehabilitate the Existing Bridge

Rehabilitating old bridges is a fairly common practice across the United States. Old bridges, particularly historic bridges, often serve as symbols of the past and as important landmarks in local communities and the rural countryside. The existing bridge at Craig is symbolic of the area due to its longevity of service and uniqueness as one of the few large single-lane truss bridges remaining in use in Montana. Rehabilitating the existing Craig Bridge would consist of salvaging usable parts from the structure and installing new members and pieces where needed. Rehabilitation would include the activities and repairs that could ensure continued use of the bridge without significantly affecting the historic integrity of the structure. The original structure would likely be left standing in place while undergoing repairs.

The environmental impacts of rehabilitating the existing bridge would be less than those associated with building a new structure since this alternative would retain the existing length, alignment, and structural system of the old bridge. Rehabilitation would not require any substantial changes to the structure's approaches and the appearance and character of the old bridge would be maintained. However, this alternative would not substantially increase the overall load rating of the bridge, change the existing structure's one-lane width and/or vertical clearance limit, or correct the sight distance problems across the structure.

4. Build Alternatives

Build alternatives would provide a new structure and roadway approaches capable of meeting all



Missouri River - Craig

Figure 3-1
Existing Craig Bridge

identified traffic safety and transportation needs at this Missouri River crossing. Montana highways and bridges are intended to meet or exceed recommended minimum geometric standards. These geometric standards are based on design policies and guidelines established by MDT and the AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF STATE HIGHWAY AND TRANSPORTATION OFFICIALS (AASHTO). Since MDT is acting on behalf of, and in the best interest of Lewis and Clark County, this project would be developed to conform to MDT "Bridge Design Standards" and current AASHTO Standard Specifications. The proposed approaches to the new structure would be designed based on criteria identified in Figure 12-4 "Geometric Design Criteria for Rural Collector Roads" in the MDT Road Design Manual.

All Build Alternatives would provide a new bridge with a 9.6 m (31.5± foot) wide roadway capable of accommodating two-way traffic. A new bridge would also include a 1.6 m (5.2± foot) wide raised sidewalk to accommodate pedestrian travel at this crossing. The new bridge would typically have a service life of between 75 and 100 years and require little maintenance over the foreseeable future. All of the build alternatives would include a new bridge able to safely carry all legal loads. The span length and pier configuration required for the new structure would vary depending upon the bridge's selected alignment and design. The build alternatives would provide new road approaches at least 8.4 m (27.6± foot) wide and surfaced with plant mix. Varying amounts of new right-of-way would be required for the Build Alternatives.

For most Build Alternatives, the present bridge and its approaches would remain in service during the construction of the new bridge. This would allow for continued through traffic on the county road and minimize inconveniences to local residents and visitors. Unless a responsible entity adopts the existing bridge in-place, the old structure would be removed and abandoned areas of the old road approaches would be obliterated and reclaimed. The existing bridge could also be removed and used at another location by an adopting party following construction of the new bridge. If a new bridge were built on the present alignment (at the same location as the existing bridge), the old structure would have to be removed or demolished before construction of a new bridge could begin.

The Build Alternatives considered for this proposed project consist of a variety of Bridge Location and Bridge Design Alternates. These alternates are discussed in the paragraphs below.

a) Bridge Location Alternates

"Location Alternates" are the different locations (alignments) for a new highway crossing of the Missouri River at Craig. A variety of locations for the new bridge were considered by MDT that would provide a new bridge at or near the site of the present structure. As indicated above, building a new bridge at the same location would require that the existing bridge be removed or demolished prior to construction. Due to statutory requirements to minimize harm to the historic Craig Bridge and substantial local interest in saving the structure, MDT's road designers also investigated both upstream and downstream alignments for a new structure. Such alignments would allow traffic to be maintained during construction of the bridge and make preservation of the old structure possible. The Build Alternates would require new right-of-way to accommodate variations from the existing alignment on the approaches to the bridge.

For convenient reference, the location alternates considered by MDT are identified as:

- ☐ **Alignment "A"** - Build a New Bridge at the Same Location
- ☐ **Alignment "B"** - Build a New Bridge on a Downstream Alignment
- ☐ **Alignment "C"** - Build a New Bridge on an Upstream Alignment
- ☐ **Other Upstream or Downstream Alignments**

FIGURE 3-2 shows the alignment alternates in relation to the existing road and bridge. A more complete description of the build alternatives is presented below.

☐ Alignment "A" – Build a New Bridge at the Same Location

Alignment A would provide a new structure and roadway approaches at the same location as the existing Craig Bridge. The horizontal alignment of the new bridge would be similar to that of the existing structure; however the vertical alignment of the approaches would be revised to provide adequate sight distance across the new structure. This alternative would require that Bridge Street and the existing road east of the crossing be closed for the duration of construction. Alternate existing river crossings north and south of Craig would have to be used by residents and visitors during construction of the new bridge.

The new crossing would be built on a tangent (straight) alignment and the east and west approaches to the new bridge would be reconstructed with horizontal curves meeting criteria for a design speed of 70 km/h (43.5± mph). Changes in the road's alignment would be most apparent on the east approach where an existing reverse curve would be eliminated.

Due to existing development along Bridge Street and the presence of the Craig FAS, the horizontal alignment of the west approach would remain similar to that of the current bridge.

☐ Alignment "B" - Build a New Bridge on a Downstream Alignment

Alignment "B" involves constructing a new bridge across the Missouri River downstream (north) of the existing Craig Bridge. This alignment option would allow the existing bridge to remain in use during construction and would provide an opportunity for the historic structure to be adopted in-place by a responsible party (or parties). The proposed bridge would cross the river on an alignment skewed about 15° to the north from the alignment of the existing bridge. The proposed centerline for the bridge would be about 12 m (40± feet) north of the centerline of the existing bridge at its west end and some 45 m (150± feet) north of the existing bridge's centerline at its east end.

The west approach would connect to Bridge Street at or near the existing Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) railroad crossing and the east approach would intersect the Recreation Road about 45 m (150± feet) south of its present location. The proposed alignment of the east approach would eliminate an existing reverse curve. The new crossing and its approaches would be built to meet criteria for the selected design speed of 70 km/h (43.5± mph).

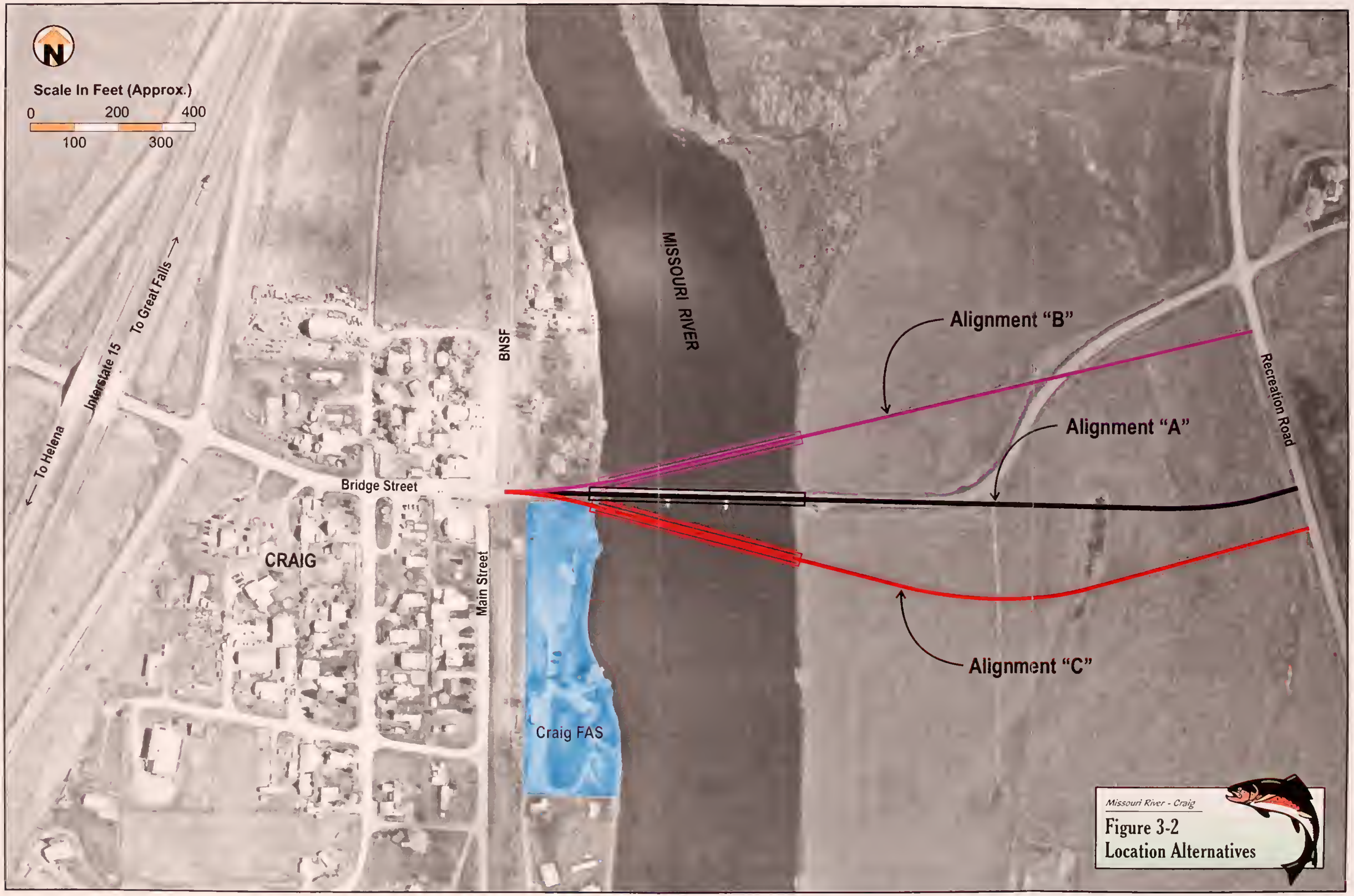


Figure 3-2
Location Alternatives

This proposed alignment would encroach on property containing a residence located near the immediately northwest of the existing bridge and may require the removal of some trees and other vegetation from the property. The construction of the west approach to the new bridge alignment could cause minor impacts at the existing approach to the Craig Fishing Access Site and would require minor reconstruction of the existing approach to the recreation site.

☐ Alignment "C" - Build a New Bridge on an Upstream Alignment

Although not investigated in detail by MDT's engineers, it is possible that a new bridge could be constructed on an alignment upstream from the existing bridge. The new bridge would have to be built following an alignment skewed to the south in order to allow the existing bridge to remain in use during construction. Such an alignment would not foreclose opportunities for the historic bridge to be adopted and used in-place.

The new crossing and its approaches would be built to meet criteria for MDT's selected design speed. The west approach would connect to Bridge Street at or near the BNSF railroad crossing but the proposed alignment would have to pass through the northern portion of the Craig FAS. The east approach would be designed to eliminate an existing reverse curve and the approach would intersect the Recreation Road at a location south of its present intersection.

☐ Other Upstream or Downstream Alignments

Other alignments located further up or downstream are possible but would require significant changes in alignment of the county road and bridge and would notably alter traffic patterns in the area. Such alignments were not evaluated in detail by MDT but would require route revisions to connect to the Recreation Road and I-15. Depending upon the location of upstream or downstream crossing locations, such alignments could require the construction of lengthy roadway extensions to connect back to the existing interchange at Craig or even a new interchange at another I-15 location.

b) Bridge Design Alternates

"Bridge Design Alternates" are the different types of structures that could be designed and built on the selected alignment for the river crossing. Key to bridge design is the selection of bridge members that are sufficiently sized to support the various loading combinations that the structure may carry during its service life. These include dead load (the weight of the bridge itself), live load (the weights of vehicles using the bridge), wind, seismic, thermal, stream, ice and other forces. The relative importance of these loads is directly related to the type of materials used in construction, anticipated traffic, climate, bridge location, stream mechanics and other environmental conditions.

The length of a bridge is typically determined by the requirements for horizontal clearance at grade (highway or railway) separations or by the requirements for waterway opening at stream crossings. For any given bridge location, there are a number of combinations of spans and lengths of spans that can be utilized. Generally, the preferred span arrangement, for a specific structure type, is the one that minimizes the number of substructure units (i.e. fewer piers with longer spans). When selecting a structure type for a specific bridge location one must compare the total required length of the bridge to historic cost data for a variety of applicable structure types. Experience will guide the designer to select a bridge type that is economically feasible and to meet the specific site requirements.

Bridges consist of various members that elevate the structure above the waterway being crossed. The bridge's **substructure** consists of abutments and vertical members (bents) that support the superstructure. An abutment is the part of a substructure that supports the end of a span. Bents are commonly used to support the ends of beams and girders. An end bent is a more flexible end support that will take the place of an abutment. Each vertical member of a bent may be called a column, or pile. Columns are supported by a foundation element (either conventional spread footing, pile footing or a drilled shaft) in the bottom of the stream or on the bank. A pier is typically a single concrete element (wall or hammer head type) used for intermediate supports of a structure either on land or in stream. Piers may be supported by footings, piles or drilled shafts.

The **superstructure** is the portion of a bridge structure that directly carries the traffic load and passes that load to the substructure. The superstructure consists of a concrete deck or other floor system, which in turn is supported by longitudinal structural members called beams, girders, or trusses.

The following text describes bridge design options considered by MDT during the development of this proposed project.

☐ Bridge Designs Considered by MDT

MDT's bridge engineers strive to provide structures that meet load requirements, provide structural integrity and structural efficiency while minimizing long-term maintenance requirements. Administrative staff and designers from MDT's Bridge Bureau collaborate to identify suitable bridge types for each bridge project. Factors considered by the Bureau in selecting appropriate bridge types include: 1) available funds for the project; 2) simplicity of design and ease of construction; 3) hydraulic requirements; 4) environmental and site conditions; 5) project cost and cost effectiveness. Most designs selected by MDT are compromises that balance the needs of the site and the cost of the project.

A wide range of bridge types could be constructed in response to existing site conditions and the structural requirements for the proposed Missouri River crossing at Craig. The vertical roadway profile for the site requires the centerline meet the existing railroad crossing on the west approach, provide adequate vertical clearance under the bridge for recreational floaters and provide for a stock crossing under the eastern end of the new bridge. The required change in roadway profile between bridge ends would be most easily accomplished with a structure composed of several short to medium length spans. This allows the bridge roadway profile to be more easily matched to the required vertical alignment.

The required roadway profile would be less easily accomplished using a structure composed of one or two long spans. The controlled flow, shallow water depth and moderate velocity of the Missouri River at Craig allow for relatively easy in-stream pier construction using standard construction practices familiar to local contractors. Montana has little need for long span bridges and thus the design and construction expertise needed for such a project is not readily available in the state. Long span structures typically cost two or three times more than a bridge made up of several short to medium length spans.

The type of design being considered by MDT for the river crossing at Craig is a multi-span bridge constructed using either steel or prestressed concrete beams with a cast in place concrete deck. Based on the MDT Bridge Bureau's preliminary review, the most appropriate structure for the Craig crossing would be composed of four spans set on three piers in the river with a total bridge length of about 170 m (560.0± feet). Each span would be comprised of a several pre-stressed concrete or steel beams each about 1,372 mm (54 inches) deep.

☐ Citizen Suggested Bridge Designs

During the May 2000 public meeting for this project held in Craig, citizens attending the meeting suggested two other design options for consideration by MDT and Lewis and Clark County. These design options are listed below and described in subsequent paragraphs:

- Reuse Existing Truss on a New Structure
- Provide a New Bridge with an "Aesthetically Pleasing/Historic" Appearance

Reuse Existing Truss on a New Structure. The idea of installing the existing truss on a new supporting structure was suggested as a means reusing the historic truss bridge. This option would require that MDT design a new substructure and superstructure near the existing bridge so the old truss be dismantled in sections and readily transferred to the new structure. This option would allow bridge designers to provide a structure capable of accommodating all legal loads and maintain the general appearance and character of the old bridge. However, unless the existing truss was modified substantially, the resulting structure would retain its one-lane deck width and possibly some vertical clearance limitations. The length of the existing truss would only be sufficient unless the replacement structure was built on a parallel alignment near the present bridge or at another crossing location requiring a bridge of similar length.

Since the old bridge would have to be dismantled to allow its placement on a new supporting structure, the existing crossing would have to be closed for a substantial part of the time during the construction of the new bridge. Alternate existing river crossings north and south of Craig would have to be used by residents and visitors during these times.

Provide a New Bridge with a "Historic" Appearance. The idea of providing an "aesthetically pleasing" bridge or a structure incorporating a more "historic" appearance was suggested at the May 2000 meeting. A member of the public expressed the opinion that MDT's typical bridge designs are not appropriate for this crossing and would be out of character with existing bridge's surroundings. The suggestion was made that MDT retain architectural and engineering services to assist in the development of a bridge more compatible with the Craig area.

Any alternate bridge design would have to comply with MDT's "Bridge Design Standards" and current AASHTO Standard Specifications and be consistent with the project's purpose and need.

C. Alternatives Eliminated from Consideration

The alternatives identified in this section were not advanced for this proposed action. The reasons that the alternatives were eliminated from consideration are also clearly discussed. The factors used to determine if an alternative should be eliminated from consideration were:

- Does the alternative meet the purpose and need specified in **Part I.** of the Environmental Assessment?
- Does the alternative result in adverse environmental impacts? and
- How acceptable is the alternative to Lewis and Clark County, affected landowners, and the public?

1. No Build Alternative

This alternative would not improve the existing bridge that MDT considers to be structurally deficient and functionally obsolete based on detailed periodic inspections by MDT. The No Build alternative does not meet the purpose and need (as described under **Part I**) for this proposed project. However, this alternative is retained for the purposes of providing a contrast or comparison with the Preferred Alternative in **Part V**.

2. Abandon the Existing Bridge and River Crossing

The alternative of abandoning the existing bridge and river crossing was dropped from consideration because it also fails to meet the specified purpose and needs for this proposed project. Such a closure would eliminate through traffic on this locally important road in Lewis and Clark County. The nomination of the bridge for replacement suggests that closing the bridge and consequently eliminating through traffic on route is inconsistent with the County's intentions to maintain traffic on the route. Comments expressed by the public at past meetings indicate that local residents and the business community want to maintain a river crossing at Craig.

Although the project area would continue to be accessible by road from either side of the Missouri River, local residents and visitors would be unduly inconvenienced by this alternative. If the river crossing at Craig were no longer open to through traffic, motorists would be required to travel 9.7 km (6.0± miles) north on I-15 to the Dearborn exit or 12.9 km (8.0± miles) south on I-15 to the Wolf Creek exit to cross the river. School busses, farm service providers, postal and package delivery services, and emergency services providers could no longer efficiently travel through this portion of the county if the Craig Bridge were closed.

Therefore, the Missouri River crossing at Craig needs to be replaced to ensure traffic can be maintained on the county road. The proposed new crossing would then serve the kinds of vehicles that would normally use this rural route over the foreseeable future.

3. Rehabilitate Existing Bridge

This alternative was eliminated from further consideration because the rehabilitated structure would not accommodate two-way travel or eliminate geometric deficiencies at the crossing. The latest Sufficiency Rating of 28.9 on a 100-point-scale suggests that the useful life of the Craig bridge has been expended.

Even if rehabilitation were to occur, the majority of the bridge would still be nearly 100 years old, and original structural components (like pin connections and pier foundations) would need to be thoroughly investigated and constantly monitored to ensure their adequacy. At best, the service life of the bridge would be extended by 20 to 25 years through an extensive rehabilitation.

The existing bridge has been and continues to be well maintained. Due to the inherent structural limitations of the existing bridge, little can be accomplished with rehabilitation. Strengthening of the truss itself would be very costly as most likely all existing members would need to be replaced in order to see any significant load increase. Major rehabilitation activities like replacing the deck and stringers may result in more severe load limits on the bridge as added dead weight of the new floor system would further reduce the ability of the truss to carry "live" loads.

Lewis and Clark County has requested that this bridge be replaced rather than rehabilitated. The County believes that continued maintenance costs in the future and the high traffic demand at Craig warrants a new bridge. Due to the size of the structure, replacing the bridge without help from MDT would not be possible for County. Therefore, rehabilitating the structure would not be consistent with the intentions of the local government. This bridge has fulfilled its useful life as a vehicle crossing and needs to be replaced.

4. Build Alternative - Location Options Eliminated

Alignment "A" - Build a New Bridge at the Same Location. Reconstructing the bridge on the existing alignment was dropped from consideration because this option would require the closure of the river crossing. The traveling public could not cross the river at Craig for the one to two year period required to build a replacement structure and motorists would be forced to use alternate river crossings either north or south of Craig. When this option was presented at a public meeting, the idea of a prolonged bridge closure was judged unacceptable to local residents and the general public. Reasons cited why this option was not supported included the inconvenience to local residents and potential adverse economic impacts on local businesses.

This option would also require the removal or relocation of the existing historic structure prior to building a new bridge at the same location. Adoption of the historic bridge in-place would not be possible. If a party (or parties) were not found to adopt and move the structure, the historic bridge would have to be demolished for salvage or stored for reuse at another location in the future.

Therefore, replacing the bridge on the present alignment is not a viable alternative.

Alignment "C" - Build a New Bridge on an Upstream Alignment. Building a new bridge immediately upstream of the present structure was eliminated from consideration because of the resulting adverse impacts to the Craig Fishing Access Site. The west approach to a new upstream bridge would have to be constructed directly through the public recreation site. *Section 4(f)* of

the *U.S. Department of Transportation Act* requires that public recreational properties like the Craig Fishing Access Site be avoided unless there are no feasible and prudent alternatives to using the property. In this instance, other alternatives that avoid or result in fewer impacts on the recreational property exist and are being considered for this proposed action.
For the above-mentioned reasons, Alignment C was not advanced as a viable Location Alternate.

Other Upstream or Downstream Alignments. Other locations for a new bridge further up or downstream from the Craig Bridge were eliminated from consideration due to the probability of substantially increasing the cost of the proposed action. Such alignments would be more costly to develop and construct and less desirable to the local community of Craig. Project costs would be higher than other options under consideration due to the need to acquire totally new right-of-way for the county road and the necessary construction of new and longer sections of roadway on each approach to the new bridge. Other river crossings would require significant changes in the alignment of the county road and would increase the amount of road Lewis and Clark County would have to maintain in the future.

Changes in the alignment of the county road could cause notable changes to traffic patterns in the area and could adversely affect other land uses or environmentally sensitive sites up or downstream of the present bridge. Adverse economic impacts to local businesses in Craig could result if a new alignment for the county road bypassed the community.

For these reasons, MDT rejected alignment options that would provide a new crossing a locations further up or downstream from the Craig Bridge.

5. Build Alternatives - Design Options Eliminated

Reuse Existing Truss on a New Structure. Incorporating an existing truss into the design of a new bridge is feasible and has been done by MDT on a few occasions, most recently on the "Red Bridge" replacement project near Boulder. However, MDT discarded the idea of reusing the old truss from the historic Craig Bridge on a newly engineered structure because of the significant design limitations imposed by such an action. A large number of the supporting members in the existing truss would have to be replaced to accommodate a wider bridge deck. Notable structural modifications would also be required to eliminate the overhead clearance limitations associated with the present bridge. Because the existing bridge was constructed on a tangent (straight) alignment across the river at Craig, the existing truss would be not be long enough for the proposed new skewed crossing. In the end, the appearance of the historic structure would be substantially altered from its present state.

This design concept was also dropped from consideration because it would require that the existing river crossing be closed for an extended period while the truss was being dismantled and modified for reuse. Public comments from past meetings on this project indicate that an extended closure of the crossing is unacceptable.

Provide a New Bridge with a "Historic" Appearance. MDT also rejected the idea of implementing a "historic-appearing" design for the new Craig Bridge based on cost concerns. Providing a structure with a more "historic" or an architecturally-engineered appearance than that of MDT's "typical" highway bridges could not be accomplished without substantially increasing the design and construction cost of the proposed project.

The expense of incorporating such a design must be considered in light of other "off-system" bridge needs in Montana. MDT estimates the total cost of a "typical" highway bridge at Craig would likely approach $3.5 million by the proposed 2003 letting date for this proposed project. This amount would be equivalent to approximately one-half of the State's total annual allocation of off-system bridge funds. MDT has committed to funding this important bridge replacement project in Lewis and Clark County due to the current deficient conditions at the crossing and the increasing demands of traffic at this site.

In the absence of other funding sources to help underwrite the cost of designing and building a "historic" appearing bridge, the proposed project must be designed and built with available funding or be deferred until funds are available. MDT cannot justify devoting more of the state's limited off-system bridge funds to this project when other equally important needs for bridge replacements exist elsewhere in the state. Deferring the project is not in the best interests of either Lewis and Clark County or traveling public.

D. Preferred Alternative and Associated Improvements

1. Overview of Preferred Alternative and Reasons for Its Selection

MDT's Preferred Action is to build a new bridge across the Missouri River on an alignment located immediately downstream (north) of the existing Craig Bridge (Alignment "B"). This action is "preferred" for the following reasons:

- the proposed alignment for the new bridge and its approaches is consistent with both this proposed project's purpose and need (see **Part I.**) and the projected traffic demands on this county road;
- the location minimizes impacts to adjacent land uses including the Craig Fishing Access Site;
- the proposed alignment improves sight distance at the crossing; and
- the existing bridge and roadway can remain in service during construction resulting in savings for traffic control and detour costs.

The proposed action is preferred as the No Build alternative does not satisfy the specified purpose and need for improvements at the river crossing. The present bridge is nearly a century old and is considered structurally deficient and functionally obsolete based on MDT's detailed evaluations of the structure's condition. The bridge is too narrow to safely provide for two lanes of traffic and load limitations have been established for the bridge that prohibits use by trucks carrying otherwise legal-weight loads.

Lewis and Clark County would also continue to be liable for the operation and maintenance of the deteriorating structure if no action is taken to replace the bridge. This liability could become more costly as the structure continues to age and deteriorate and the risk of a failure increases. The limitation on the use of the bridge by some large vehicles inconveniences local residents and could potentially place property and lives at risk in extreme emergencies like fires. A bridge failure would severely inhibit transportation in this part of the county and require a lengthy detour around the project area.

Conditions relating to the No Build Alternative provide the basis for establishing the Purpose and Need for this proposed action as stated in **Part I**. That Part of this document suggests that the No Build Alternative does not meet the traveling public's needs because it does not address deficient structural conditions and the limited vertical clearance associated with the existing bridge, fails to meet MDT's optimal width for two-lane roadways, and would not improve an alignment which restricts driver visibility at the river crossing.

2. Description of Preferred Alternative

The following sections provide a description of the activities and features associated with MDT's Preferred Alternative.

New Right-of-Way Acquisition

Construction of the Preferred Alternative would require an estimated 1.46 hectares (ha) or (3.6± acres) of new right-of-way. The majority of this new right-of-way would be required on the east side of the river due to the realignment of the county road.

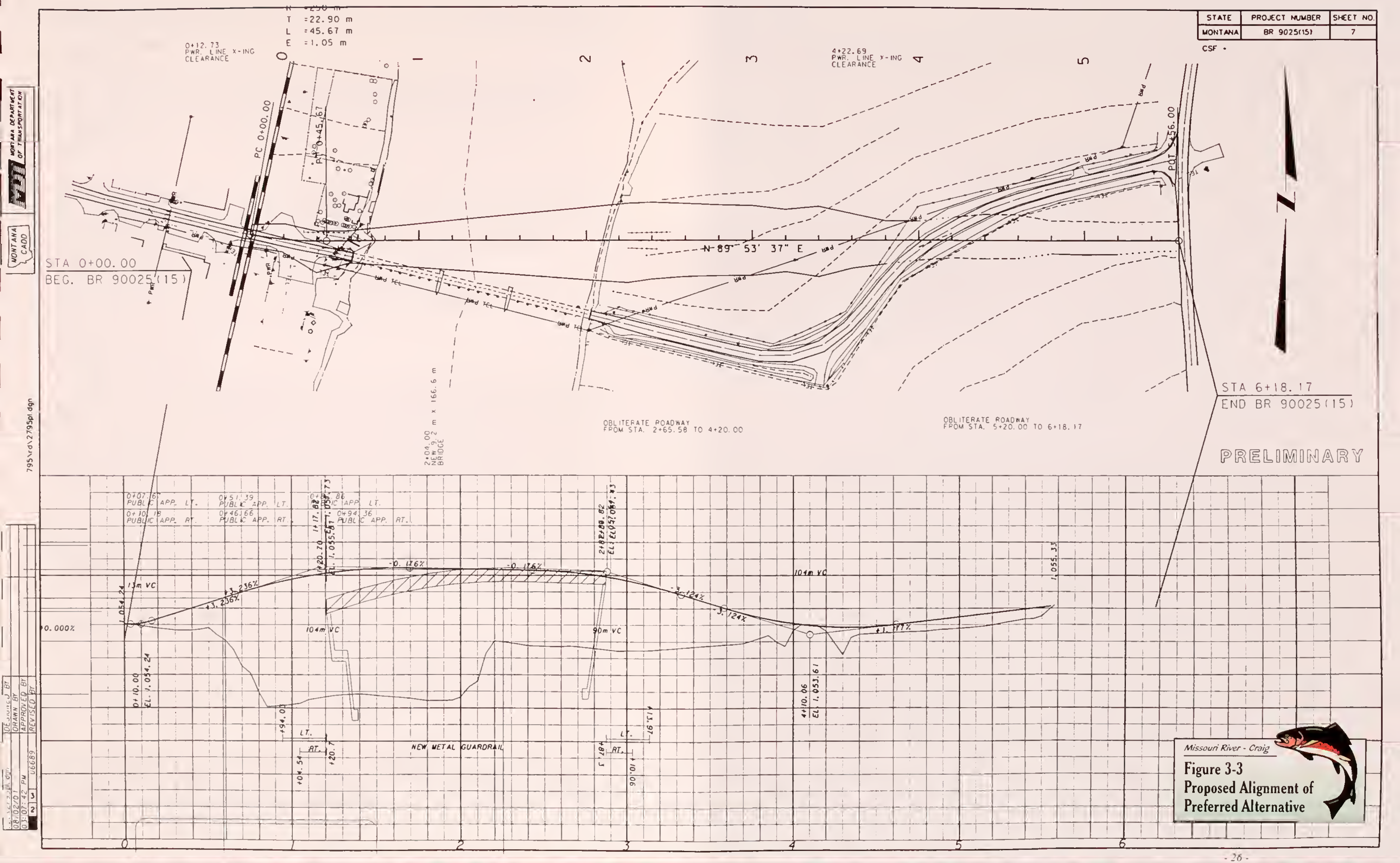
Proposed Bridge and Its Approaches

The proposed new bridge would be about 170 m (560.0± feet) long and built on a skewed alignment immediately downstream from the existing Craig Bridge. On average, the new bridge would also be about 0.3 m (1.0± feet) higher than the existing structure requiring a slight grade raise on the approaches. The west approach to the bridge would be rebuilt from the new bridge to just west of the existing railroad crossing in Craig. On the east side of the crossing, the approach would be constructed on a new alignment from the bridge end to the Recreation Road. The new grades on the approaches to the proposed bridge would be about 3.5%.

Site preparation work would include clearing, and grading. Drainage structures with adequate roadside ditches to accommodate runoff from the roadway would be installed and slopes would be stabilized and revegetated. New fences would be installed where necessary along the approaches to the new bridge. Advisory and regulatory signs would be installed according to standards outlined in the *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices* (MUTCD). Guardrail would be placed in locations warranted by roadside slope conditions.

Considering inflation and a letting date in early 2003, MDT estimates the total cost for the proposed Craig Bridge project to be about $3.42 million. Continued use of the existing river crossing would minimize delays and inconveniences for the traveling public during construction.

FIGURE 3-3 shows the proposed alignment for the Preferred Alternative.



Missouri River - Craig

Figure 3-3
Proposed Alignment of Preferred Alternative

Design Speed

The Preferred Alternative would be developed to comply with geometric criteria for a 70 km/h (43.5± mph) design speed. All of the pertinent features of the highway must be related to the design speed to obtain a balanced and sound design for the facility. The design speed is established based on the topography, adjacent land use, and the functional classification of the county road.

Requirements for stopping sight distance length and other geometric features such as horizontal and vertical curvature and superelevation (the degree of banking on curves) are directly related to and vary substantially with design speed. Other features, like pavement and shoulder widths and clearances to roadside obstructions, are not directly related to design speed but they affect travel speeds. Highway designers strive to use the highest design speed as practicable for safety, mobility, and efficiency reasons.

Controlling geometric standards for a 70 km/h design are identified in *Figure 12-5: Geometric Design Criteria for Rural Collector Roads* in MDT's "Road Design Manual."

Posted Speed Limit

Although MDT has determined that a 70 km/h (43.5± mph) design speed is appropriate for this proposed project, however, the design speed is not the only consideration for the establishment of reasonable posted speed limits. The posted speed limit would remain unchanged on Bridge Street within the community of Craig. The existing posted speed limit of 16 km/h (10± mph) for the existing crossing was set because of the restricted sight distance across the bridge, its one-lane configuration, and its limited load carrying capacity. Since this proposed project would eliminate all of these restrictions, the current posted speed limit for the bridge would not be appropriate for the new bridge.

Lewis and Clark County has the authority to establish speed limits on its county roads. An engineering study of travel speeds would be conducted after the bridge and roadway are open to the public. The results of the engineering study would be used by the County to establish an appropriate speed limit for the county road within the Craig Bridge project area.

Typical Road and Bridge Cross-Sections

The new approaches to the bridge would typically have paved surfaces typically 8.4 m (27.6± feet) wide accommodating two 3.6 m (11.8± feet) wide travel lanes and two 0.6 m (2.0± feet) wide shoulders. The approaches would be constructed with a plant mix bituminous (asphalt) surface over the top of a crushed gravel base course. The pavement on the approaches would be designed to last at least 20 years.

The concrete deck of the proposed bridge would accommodate a 9.6 m (31.5± feet) wide roadway consisting of two 3.6 m (11.8± feet) wide travel lanes and two 1.2 m (3.9± feet) wide shoulders plus a 1.6 m (5.2± feet) wide sidewalk. The proposed typical cross-sections for the bridge and its approaches are presented in **FIGURE 3-4**.

Sidewalks

A 1.6 m (5.2± feet) wide sidewalk would also be provided along the upstream (south) side of the proposed bridge. The sidewalk would be ramped down to street level and conform to standards required by the *AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA)*.

Intersections and Approaches

Public and private approaches would be designed and reconstructed to fit local conditions and in a manner that would ensure safe entry and exit from the county road. Approaches would typically be aligned to intersect the roadway at angles between 75 and 90 degree to provide adequate sight distance. MDT proposes to provide 7.2 m (23.6± feet) wide paved approaches where other public roads join the county road. Field approaches (those approaches that provide access only to pasture or farmland) would receive a narrower paved strip and gravel surfacing to the new right-of-way line. All slopes for approaches would be designed to current MDT standards.

The existing railroad crossing near the west end of the existing and proposed new bridge would be upgraded or replaced. MDT would evaluate the need for warning lights and automatic gates at the existing railroad crossing. These features would be included only if specific warrants for their use are met.

Storm Drainage Features

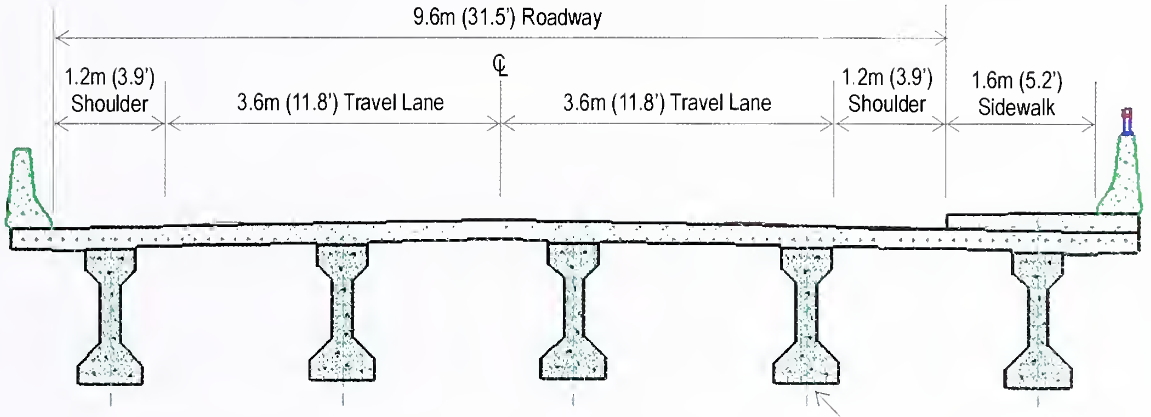
A small retention pond to hold storm water coming off the new bridge would be constructed on the west side of the river, adjacent to the south side of the bridge. Roadside ditches with appropriately sized drainage culverts would be provided along the new east approach to the bridge.

Stockpass Installation

MDT would install a stock pass under the east end of the proposed new bridge to accommodate livestock passage beneath the highway.

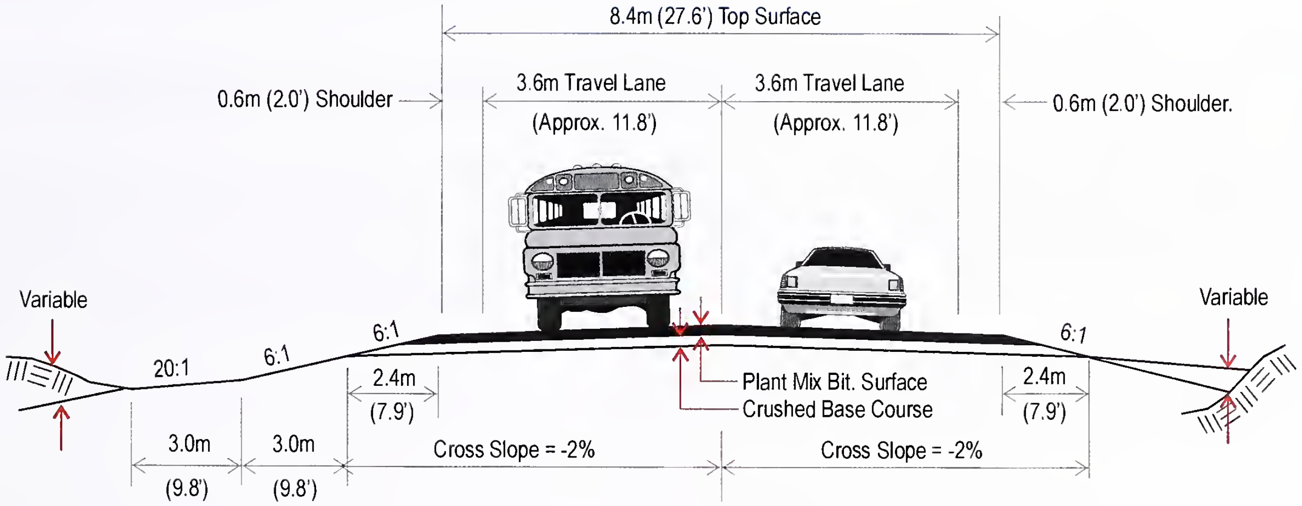
Existing Roadway Obliteration and Revegetation

The existing county road and its supporting fills on the east side of the current crossing no longer needed would be obliterated and restored to a natural condition as part of this proposed project. Due to the proposed shift in alignment on the east approach to the new bridge, MDT would obliterate approximately 252 m (828 feet) of the existing county road on the east side of the present river crossing. Lands disturbed by the proposed bridge replacement project would be graded, top-soiled, and seeded with appropriate species.



Note: beams may be either prestressed concrete (shown) or steel.

Typical Cross - Section of Proposed Bridge



Typical Cross - Section of Proposed Approaches

Missouri River - Craig

Figure 3-4
Typical Road/Bridge
Cross - Sections

Disposition of the Existing Craig Bridge

Since Lewis and Clark County no longer wants the maintenance responsibility or continued liability for the historic Craig Bridge, MDT advertised the structure for adoption. Six parties expressed interest in the old structure and were asked to submit formal proposals for adoption to MDT during March 2001. The only proposal received by MDT prior to its submittal deadline was from an individual who wanted to remove the Craig Bridge and use the structure on private land elsewhere in the area.

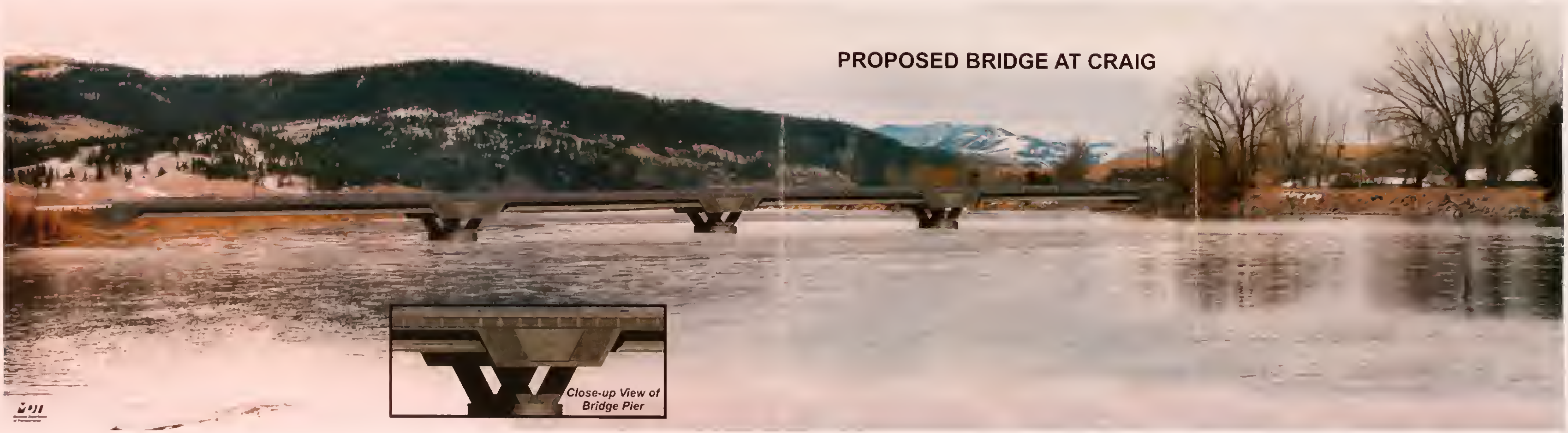
Shortly after the deadline, a group from Helena interested in adopting the bridge in-place contacted MDT. The group requested additional time to work out the details of assuming liability for the old bridge. After discussing the proposal to adopt the structure in-place with the party that wanted to remove the bridge, MDT agreed that the group should be afforded the opportunity to fully develop a plan to adopt the structure. If this proposal falls through, MDT would offer the bridge to the individual wishing to dismantle and use the old bridge elsewhere.

MDT Photo Simulations

FIGURES 3-5 and **3-6** show the existing Craig Bridge and the probable appearance of the new bridge. Photo rendering techniques were used to illustrate the likely features and appearance of the proposed new bridge. The figures depict what the Missouri River crossing at Craig would look like with and without the historic bridge in-place.

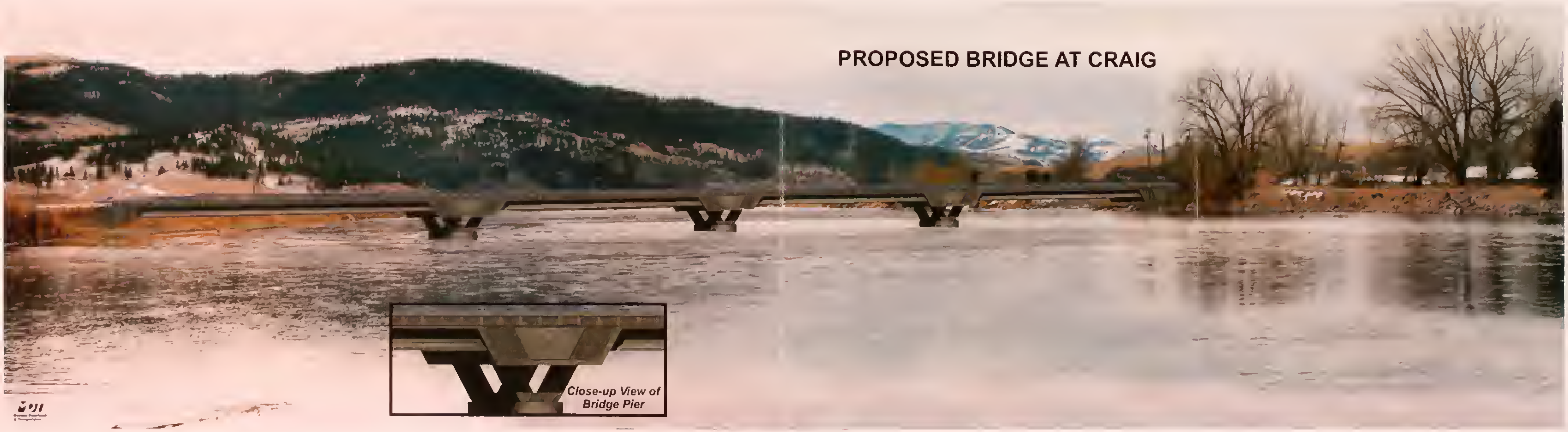
Anticipated Schedule for Letting and Construction

MDT currently plans to let this proposed project to contract in March 2003. Construction activities for the new bridge would begin shortly after the contract was awarded later in 2003. The total project construction period for the proposed project would take approximately 1 to 1.5 years, depending on project letting dates.



Missouri River - Craig

Figure 3-6
Proposed Bridge With
Existing Bridge Removed



Missouri River - Craig

Figure 3-6
Proposed Bridge With
Existing Bridge Removed

Missouri River - Craig
BR 9025(15)
Environmental Assessment

IV. AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

IV. AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT and ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

A. Introduction

A review of the social, economic, and environmental conditions and resources affected by the proposed Missouri River bridge replacement at Craig was completed for this EA. Resources likely to be affected were identified through agency contacts, literature reviews, research and field studies, and public involvement activities. Contacts with these interested parties also helped identify issues or concerns relevant to the proposed action. Major issues for the proposed Craig Bridge replacement project are highlighted below:

- Effects on the historic Craig Bridge and other historic features in the project area;
- Potential impacts on the Craig Fishing Access Site;
- Impacts on recreational use of the Missouri River and its banks;
- Effects on threatened/endangered and sensitive wildlife and fish species; and
- Impacts of the project on the local economy.

These and other relevant issues are addressed in the following sections.

This Part of the EA also discusses the potential environmental effects of implementing either MDT's Preferred Alternative or taking no action. As indicated in Part III, the No Build Alternative is being analyzed for the purposes of providing a contrast or comparison with the Preferred Alternative. A brief description of the existing environmental conditions in the project area is presented to help identify any changes in these conditions that may result from the implementation of these alternatives. Only the impacts with a reasonable possibility for individual or cumulative impacts are assessed in this Part. Where appropriate, measures to mitigate the adverse environmental effects of the Preferred Alternative are discussed in each section.

B. Impacts to the Natural Environment

1. Impacts to Landforms, Geology and Soils

The community of Craig is located within the Northern Rocky Mountains Physiographic Province of the United States and within the upper Missouri River Basin of southwestern Montana. The topography of the Craig area consists of low riparian lands along the Missouri River, the ridges and highlands of the Adel Mountains to the east and west, and rolling grass lands in the foothills of the Big Belt Mountains to the south. The Craig Bridge and its approaches are situated in "bottom land" of the Missouri River and the terrain is relatively flat at an elevation of about 1,097 m (3,600± feet) above sea level. The elevation of terrain west of I-15 at Craig and east of the Recreation Road rises sharply to more than 1,160 m (3,800± feet).

The geology of the Craig area is generally the result of cycles of continental uplift, erosion and deposition by the Missouri River, glacial and volcanic action, and weathering. The Adel Mountains, the eroded remnants of a volcano active about 50 million year ago, cover thick formations of Cretaceous sedimentary rocks deposited over 80 million years ago. Igneous rocks (primarily shonkinite) form the rugged outcrops and characteristic dikes (ridges) on nearby slopes of the Adels (David Alt and Donald W. Hyndman, *Roadside Geology of Montana*, 1986). Within the last 10,000 years, glaciation and continued erosion and deposition of volcanic and sedimentary rocks have caused further changes to the local geology. Past migrations by the Missouri River produced the floodplain that borders the river and the meanders present today in the Craig area.

The project area is located in a zone of relatively frequent earthquake activity known as the Intermountain Seismic Belt. The Craig area (as well as much of western Montana) is within a moderate-to-high seismic risk zone.

Impacts of the Preferred Alternative. The proposed bridge replacement would involve minor cutting and filling to construct fills to support the road approaches to the new bridge. Shifting the road's alignment and constructing a new and wider roadway on the east approach to the bridge would disrupt, displace, compact, and cover soils not currently associated with the existing highway. Similar impacts would occur on the west approach to the new bridge. However, the impacts along the west approach would be minor since the proposed alignment would disturb a relatively small area and affect previously developed lands within Craig.

Roadside slopes would be graded and revegetated to blend with the adjoining lands. This would help stabilize slopes and to minimize the visual effects of newly disturbed areas. The presently traveled way (PTW) would be obliterated where it cannot be incorporated into the foundation of the new approaches. The ground would be contoured to match existing terrain in areas where the old road is obliterated.

Surface and subsurface materials would be disturbed at locations away from the project area if additional material would be necessary to build the new approaches to the bridge. Typically, MDT's contractor would provide any additional fill material needed for the proposed project.

The construction activities, including clearing and grading, would increase the short-term and long-term potential for soil erosion and sediment transport. This potential for erosion and adverse sedimentation impacts would vary depending upon the amount of soil area disturbed, the nature of the soils disturbed, the steepness of slopes, the proximity of the disturbance to wetlands and surface waters, and the duration of the soil disturbance.

An Erosion Control Plan would be designed for the proposed project and it would be submitted to the MDEQ Permitting and Compliance Division in accordance with their Montana Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Regulations (ARM 16.20.1314). Best Management Practices, including temporary and long-term erosion control measures, would be considered in the design of these Plans. Such measures may include the use of lined channels, silt fences, ditch blocks, mulch, slope protection and other commonly accepted measures. The Plan would be based on Guidelines from MDT's "Highway Construction Standard Erosion Control Workplan" whose main objective is to minimize erosion of disturbed areas during and after construction.

In accordance with **7-22-2152** and **60-2-208, M.C.A.**, MDT would also reestablish a permanent desirable vegetation community along all areas disturbed by the construction of the proposed bridge and its approaches. The Contractor must follow a set of revegetation guidelines developed by MDT specifically for this proposed project.

Cumulative Impacts. The proposed bridge replacement at Craig combined with other ongoing and planned development activities, would not cause any notable cumulative effects on the topography, geologic conditions or soils within the project area.

Impacts of the No Build Alternative. The No Build Alternative would not disturb any additional surface or subsurface materials in the vicinity of the Craig Bridge.

Mitigating Measures. The following measures would be implemented to minimize project-related effects on the topographic and geologic conditions within the Craig Bridge area.

- *To stabilize slopes and to minimize the visual effects of new cuts and fills, slopes would be rounded and revegetated to blend with the adjoining lands.*
- *An Erosion Control Plan employing Best Management Practices for controlling erosion and sediment transport would be implemented in each project area.*

2. Impacts to Important Farmland

The U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE (NRCS) in Helena was contacted in May 2000 to identify important soils that may be affected by this proposed bridge project. The *FARMLAND POLICY PROTECTION ACT* (*FPPA* - **7 U.S.C. 4201**, *et seq.*) requires special consideration be given to soils considered as prime farmland, unique farmland, or farmland of statewide or local importance by the NRCS.

The NRCS District Conservationist identified one soil type, Korell Loam (0-2% slopes), as being "farmland of statewide importance." The symbol for this soil type is 112A on NRCS soils maps. Korell soils are very deep, well-drained soils formed in alluvium and are found on floodplains. These soils are mainly used for irrigated and non-irrigated cropland. This soil type exists on the east side of the Missouri River and would be crossed by the east approach to the new bridge.

Impacts of the Preferred Alternative. Of importance under the *FPPA* are direct and indirect conversions of farmland. Direct conversions occur when soils meeting the definition of farmland are included in the proposed highway right-of-way and/or are incorporated into the new facility. Indirect conversions of farmland occur when the areas remaining in a tract of land partially taken for right-of-way would no longer be capable of being farmed due to access restrictions; or would likely be converted to a non-farm use due to the accessibility of the highway.

Assuming a standard right-of-way corridor extending 20 m (65.6± feet) to either side of the proposed centerline, the Preferred Alternative would directly convert 0.74 hectares (ha) (1.83± acres) of important farmland to highway right-of-way. No indirect conversions of important farmland would result from this proposed action.

A Farmland Conservation Impact Rating form (#AD-1006) was processed for this project in accordance with *FPPA*. The *Total Points* for this project's Site Assessment Criteria were 118. Since the *Total Points* were less than 160 points, no further consideration for protection is necessary and no additional Important Farmlands evaluations will be made for this proposed project. The completed form was not submitted to the NRCS but a copy is provided in **APPENDIX B**.

Cumulative Impacts. The proposed bridge replacement together with the impacts of present and future development activities, such scattered rural residential construction, would continue to convert minor amounts of farmland in Lewis and Clark County to other uses. These conversions would not represent a substantial loss of important farmland in the county.

Impacts of the No Build Alternative. The No Build Alternative would not convert any additional prime, unique or important farmland in the project area.

3. Impacts to Water Resources and Quality

Surface Water Resources and Quality. The Missouri River is the major drainage feature in the project area and in Lewis and Clark County. The Missouri River flows 3,767 km (2,341 miles) from its headwaters at the confluence of the Gallatin, Madison, and Jefferson Rivers at Three Forks, Montana before joining the Mississippi River. The Missouri River at Craig lies within the Upper Missouri-Dearborn watershed that extends from Little Prickly Pear Creek to the Marias River. The watershed is drained by 37 major rivers and streams and contains some 139 lakes. The Missouri River and Holter Lake are productive fisheries and popular for water-based recreation. Holter Lake is located 6.5 km (4 miles) upstream and is accessed from the Recreation Road between Wolf Creek and Craig.

The project area has an extensive surface drainage network characteristic of valley and foothills topography. Minor drainages in the project area include Dog Creek, which enters the Missouri south (upstream) of Craig and Wegner and Stickney Creeks, which join the Missouri River north (downstream) from the community. All of the drainages flow towards the Missouri River, which flows through the project area in a northerly direction.

The MDEQ considers surface waters in major streams and their tributaries in the project area to be "B-1" Class waters. Such waters are suitable for bathing, swimming, and recreation; growth and propagation of salmonid fishes and associated aquatic life, waterfowl, and furbearers. The quality of B-1 waters is suitable for drinking, culinary, and food processing purposes after conventional treatment; and agricultural and industrial water supplies.

The MDEQ has the responsibility under *Section 401* of the federal *Clean Water Act* (**33 U.S.C. 1251 – 1376**) and the *Montana Water Quality Act* (**75-5-101 M.C.A.**, *et seq.*) to monitor and assess the quality of Montana surface waters and to identify impaired or threatened stream segments and lakes. The MDEQ sets limits, known as Total Maximum Daily (TMDLs), for each pollutant entering a body of water. TMDLs are established for streams or lakes that fail to meet certain standards for water quality and describe the amount of each pollutant a waterbody can receive without violating water quality standards. The legislatively mandated TMDL process determines the concentration of pollutants in waterbodies and stipulates controls needed to improve water quality in order to support designated uses.

The MDEQ identifies streams or lakes that do not fully meet water quality standards and support the appropriate beneficial uses or that are fully supporting their uses as stipulated in the standards but are threatened. Every two years, the MDEQ prepares and submits a list of these impaired or threatened waters to the EPA as required under *Section 303(d)* of the *Clean Water Act*. The Missouri River in the project area was on MDEQ's 1998 *303(d) Waterbodies In Need of TMDL Development* List. At that time, the agency listed flow alterations, metals, nutrients, suspended solids, siltation and other organics, as parameters of concern within the Upper Missouri - Dearborn Watershed.

The MDEQ released its Final Year 2000 Montana *303(d)* List on November 24, 2000 and the reach of the Missouri from Little Prickly Pear Creek to Sheep Creek is not on the new *303(d)* List. MDEQ found that it "lacks sufficient credible data" to make beneficial use support determinations for this reach of the Missouri River. Sufficient credible data has been defined by the Montana State Legislature as "chemical, physical, or biological monitoring data, alone or in combination with narrative information, that supports a finding as to whether a water body is achieving compliance with applicable water quality standards." MDEQ has determined that water quality monitoring must be performed within this river reach in coming years so beneficial use support determinations can be made and TMDL standards can be established if necessary.

Ground Water Resources and Quality. The occurrence, movement, and quality of groundwater in the project area are closely tied to the surrounding geological conditions. Aquifers in Lewis and Clark County can be divided into four categories: bedrock aquifers, tertiary basin fill aquifers, glacial aquifers and alluvial aquifers. The Craig area is served by shallow, unconfined alluvial aquifers composed of coarse-grained deposits. Craig residents obtain their water supply from private wells. Water from these wells is of good quality and the quantity is adequate for domestic needs.

Impacts of the Preferred Alternative. The existing structure would be replaced with a multi-span bridge constructed immediately downstream of the existing bridge. MDT has preliminarily selected a structure comprised of four spans requiring three piers within the river channel. The abutment at the east end of the bridge would be set back from the river's edge to allow stock and pedestrian passage and the abutment at the west end of the new bridge would also likely allow pedestrian passage. Consequently, beyond pier placement, little encroachment into the channel is expected. Only minor riprap placement would likely be required at each abutment. A small retention pond to hold storm water coming off the new bridge would be constructed on the west side of the river, adjacent to the south side of the bridge.

Impacts to the Missouri River would primarily result from direct disturbance associated with bridge construction or possibly the removal of the old structure. Construction activities may occur both up and downstream of the existing bridge. Such activities may include construction and use of temporary work bridges, cofferdams for pier construction, and the use of an in-stream work barge. Temporary bridges would be removed following construction of the new bridge.

Although some uncertainties currently exist regarding the adoption of the historic bridge by an interested group, it appears likely the old bridge will remain in place and converted to use only by non-motorized forms of transportation. Few impacts, other than the potential for contamination during maintenance activities on the structure or littering, would be expected to result if the bridge is adopted in place. If the existing structure were not adopted, it would be removed and reused at another location. Removal of the old structure would require working within and adjacent to the river. Temporary impacts to water quality would be likely since the piers for the old bridge would have to be demolished to facilitate their removal from the channel bottom.

Construction activities would result in temporary increased erosion potential, reduced slope stability, and would temporarily increase turbidity in the river downstream of the project, particularly during precipitation events. Water quality could be indirectly affected over the short term by the influx of fuel and other pollutants from unpaved surfaces during storm events, which could temporarily affect stream productivity in the immediate project area. Pier and abutment construction and removal would result in temporary turbidity increases by disturbing the river bottom and re-suspending existing sediments in the water column.

Temporary degradation of surface waters would occur from this proposed project due to the need to excavate material from within the channel and place minor amounts of fill materials along the banks of the Missouri River. Limited excavation within the riverbed would be necessary to construct conventional or drilled shaft piers to support the new bridge. Riprap and small amounts of fill would be placed along the banks of the Missouri River to construct end bents and approaches to the new bridge.

The proposed bridge and highway construction activities could adversely affect the quality of surface waters in the project area unless preventative measures are taken. Rock or soil particles could be transported to surface waters by runoff and deposited at downstream locations. This process occurs naturally to some extent, however, the erosion of areas disturbed by the construction could contribute additional sediments to surface waters. Increased sediment loads may alter downstream deposition patterns, cause water temperatures to increase, cause the turbidity of the water to rise, increase the level of nutrients (nitrates and phosphorus), decrease the quality of existing fisheries, and promote algal growth. However, this proposed project would not generate sediments at a level that would cause such adverse effects.

Highway designers would develop an Erosion Control Plan incorporating appropriate Best Management Practices (BMPs) to control erosion of disturbed areas and sediment transport to wetlands or surface waters during the construction and post-construction phases of the project. With the proper design, implementation, and follow up actions, the BMPs would minimize erosion and the potential for sediments to enter surface waters.

The timing of work within the channel and other restrictions would be indicated as conditions of approval for the issuance of a *124SPA* Stream Protection Permit from the MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS (MDFWP). Likewise, the placement of any fill material in the Missouri River would be subject to a *Section 404* permit issued by the U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS (COE). These and other permit requirements are discussed at the end of this Part.

The Preferred Alternative would not affect other surface waters or ground water resources in the project area.

Impacts of the No Build Alternative. The No Build Alternative would not cause any new effects on surface or ground water quality in the project area.

Mitigating Measures. The following measures would be implemented to minimize potential adverse effects to water quality.

- *Best management practices for erosion control would be applied in the project area to minimize sediment transport from disturbed lands to the Missouri River.*

4. Floodplain Impacts

Executive Order No. 11988 and FHWA's floodplain regulations (23 CFR 650, Subpart A) require that the effects of the proposed action be evaluated to determine if any of its alternatives encroach on the "base" floodplain. The "base" floodplain is the area covered by water from the 100-year flood. The 100-year flood represents a flood event that has a 1% chance of being equaled or exceeded in any given year. The Executive Order requires that federal agencies, in carrying out their proposed projects, provide leadership and take action to reduce the risk of flood loss; minimize the impacts of floods on human safety, health, and welfare; and restore and preserve the natural and beneficial values served by floodplains.

The FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY (FEMA) has prepared detailed floodplain maps for portions of Lewis and Clark County, including the Craig area. Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) #975B describes the 100-year floodplain of Missouri River at Craig by approximate methods. Downstream of the existing bridge, the width of the floodplain is approximately 183 m (590± feet).

Additional flood protection at this crossing is provided by Holter Dam located upstream from Craig. This and other upstream dams allow stream managers the ability to store runoff from the upper Missouri River system and regulate downstream discharges.

Impacts of the Preferred Alternative. This proposed project would construct a new bridge across the delineated floodplain of the Missouri River at Craig. MDT has completed detailed a hydraulic analysis for this river crossing to serve as a basis for designing the new bridge. MDT has established the elevation of the 100-year flood at the Missouri River crossing at Craig to be 1053.95 m (3,458.0± feet). The low-beam elevation is approximately 0.75 m (2.5± feet) above the 100-year flood surface elevation at this crossing. The proposed low-beam elevation for the proposed bridge would match that of the existing structure.

The proposed bridge would be designed to ensure that water surface elevations do not increase over existing conditions for the 100-year flood event with or without the present structure in-place. The piers for the proposed bridge would be set parallel to the river's flow direction and generally aligned with piers on the existing Craig Bridge. Riprap would be placed on the abutment slopes at each end of the new structure but the width of the river channel would not be reduced. The proposed project would comply with **Executive Order 11988** by not promoting or encouraging development within the floodplain or increasing flood liability hazards. MDT standard procedures and specifications would ensure that the required transverse encroachment for the new bridge complies with FHWA guidelines.

Lewis and Clark County regulates activities within the designated floodplain for the FEMA. A floodplain permit would be required prior to construction of the new bridge.

Impacts of the No Build Alternative. This alternative would have no new effects on the Missouri River floodplain. There are no risks of new flooding, no impacts on natural and beneficial floodplain values, and no likelihood of incompatible floodplain development.

5. Air Quality Impacts

Air quality within the project area can be described as good. No violations of state or federal air quality standards are known. Short-term and localized areas of air quality pollution may occur at times during the year due to dust generated by traffic on unpaved roads in the area, agricultural activities, and from occasional outside burning.

Impacts of the Preferred and No Build Alternatives. The proposed bridge replacement project is located in an unclassifiable/attainment area of Montana for air quality under 40 CFR 81.327, as amended. As such, this project is not covered under the U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY'S (EPA's) **Final Rule** of November 24, 1993 on Air Quality conformity. Therefore, the proposed project complies with *Section 176(c)* of the *CLEAN AIR ACT* **(42 U.S.C. 7521(a))**, as amended.

This bridge replacement is an action whose individual and cumulative effects would be minor and would not affect regional emissions. These conclusions can be reasonably made on the basis of analyses done for many similar projects across the country. For these reasons, neither the Preferred Alternative nor the No Build Alternative would be expected to result in adverse air quality impacts.

6. Impacts to Vegetation

General. Area soils support a mosaic of grassland and riparian plant communities. The native vegetation in the area has been converted to urban development, roads, seeded right-of-way, and agricultural land. Common grass species along existing approach roads include smooth brome, cheatgrass brome, intermediate wheatgrass, basin wild rye, and crested wheatgrass. Riparian areas bordering the Missouri River also contain stands of cottonwoods, Russian olive, American elm, and Woods rose. Agricultural fields east of the Craig Bridge are dominated by alfalfa, smooth brome, and domestic wheat.

Threatened or Endangered Plants. The U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE (USFWS) lists Ute ladies'-tresses (*Spiranthes diluvialis*) as a threatened plant species in this area of Montana under the *ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT* **(16 U.S.C. 1531-1543)**. The nearest known occurrence of Ute ladies' tresses occurs in Broadwater County more than 105 km (65 miles) southeast of Craig.

Habitat for this plant species does not occur in the immediate vicinity and MDT's biological resources consultant did not observe the plant during a July 2000 field visit to the project area. For these reasons, Ute ladies' tresses are not considered to be present in the project area.

Rare or Sensitive Plants. The MONTANA NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM (MNHP) maintains a database on the occurrence of rare or sensitive plants in the state. According to the MNHP database, no sensitive plant locations are known to occur within 24 km (15 miles) of the project area. Chaffweed, roundleaf waterhyssop, California waterwort, and northern wild-rye are sensitive plants that could potentially occur along the Missouri River in the general project area. However, these species would not be expected to occur near the Craig Bridge due to the extensive conversion of native land cover by agriculture and urbanization.

Invasive/Noxious Plants. Both the federal and state governments have regulations concerning noxious weeds. **Executive Order No. 13112**, signed in February 1999, requires federal agencies whose actions may affect the status of invasive species to prevent the introduction of invasive species, detect and control populations of such species, monitor invasive species populations, and restore native species and habitats that have been invaded to the extent practical and permitted by law.

The Montana Department of Agriculture defines a noxious weed as "any non-native plant that is harmful to agriculture, wildlife, forestry, recreation and other beneficial use of the land. Of the 23 listed or proposed noxious weeds in Montana, two were commonly observed in the project area. Canada thistle is scattered along the existing highway right-of-way and is common in the agricultural fields east of the present bridge. Spotted knapweed was observed at various locations in the project area but occurs most frequently along the west approach to the existing bridge. These weeds are listed as Category 1 noxious weeds by the State. Category 1 noxious weeds are weeds that are currently established and generally widespread in many counties of the state. Both Canada thistle and spotted knapweed are capable of rapidly spreading and limiting beneficial use of infested lands.

The State of Montana assigns responsibility for noxious weed control to each county. According to the Lewis and Clark County *Weed Control Management Policy*, spotted knapweed is a Management Priority Group #2 species and Canada thistle is a Management Priority Group #4 species. Group # 4 species have widespread infestations within the weed management district and Group #2 species are generally limited to small infestations throughout the district.

Impacts of the Preferred Alternative. Temporary disturbances would occur where vegetation is cleared from the right-of-way, at staging areas for construction equipment and at borrow sites. Virtually all of the proposed construction would occur in areas immediately adjacent to the existing road currently subjected to other sources of human disturbance, including residential, recreational, and agricultural (farming, grazing) activities. Consequently, the effects of the proposed project on vegetation communities, including wetland and riparian vegetation, would be minor. None of the affected vegetation provides high quality habitats for wildlife or waterfowl.

The proposed bridge replacement project would not affect any federally-listed threatened or endangered plant species or any rare and sensitive plant species.

Many noxious weed species gain a foothold after ground disturbances; therefore the potential for the spread of noxious weeds (like spotted knapweed and Canada thistle already in the project area) is a concern due to the disturbance associated with the proposed project. Once noxious weeds become established, they are often extremely difficult and very expensive to eradicate or control. Noxious weed movement from highway corridors onto adjacent land can reduce the value of an area for rangeland, wildlife habitat, or other uses.

Implementation of weed control measures prior to and during construction would reduce the potential severity of this impact. Construction activities should comply with provisions in the *Weed Control Management Policy* for the Lewis and Clark County Weed Management District. Measures recommended for weed control by the County include: spraying weeds prior to initial disturbance; use of weed-free soils and other materials, including certified weed-free seed for reclamation; and maintaining weed control along the project for an adequate period of time following construction.

In accordance with Executive Order No. 13112 *Invasive Species*, MDT would implement measures to help prevent the introduction of invasive species into the Craig project area. These measures would include coordinating the projects with the County Weed Board, promptly reseeding disturbed areas with desirable vegetation, and requiring MDT's contractors to follow procedures to prevent the spread of noxious weeds.

Cumulative Impacts. Ground disturbing activities from the proposed bridge replacement project and other present and future development in the project area could result in the loss of minor amounts of native vegetation and offer the potential for the spread of noxious weeds.

Impacts of the No Build Alternative. This alternative would cause no further impacts on vegetation within the Craig area.

Mitigating Measures. The following measures would be implemented to minimize vegetation impacts and reduce the potential for the spread of noxious weeds in the Craig Bridge project area.

- *All grubbing and clearing operations would be strictly confined to MDT's defined construction limits.*
- *Disturbed areas would be reseeded as quickly as possible after construction.*
- *A revegetation plan would be developed for this project to be followed by the Contractor. The plan would include specifications on seeding methods, seeding dates, types and amounts of mulch and fertilizer, and seed mix components. The plan would also be submitted to the County Weed Board for review.*
- *The Contractor must also follow the requirements of the COUNTY NOXIOUS WEED MANAGEMENT ACT and all county and contract noxious weed control provisions.*

- *Mulch used for revegetation would be certified as weed-free.*
- *Inspect borrow sites prior to use so that sites with chronic weed problems can be excluded from use during construction.*

7. Impacts to Wetlands

Wetlands in the project area were delineated during July 2000 by a biological resources consultant. Project area wetlands were delineated according to criteria and methods outlined in the U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS (COE) *Wetlands Delineation Manual* (Environmental Laboratory 1987). The manual determines the presence of jurisdictional wetlands based on observations of vegetation, soils, and hydrology. Wetland location maps, found plant species lists, and COE Routine Wetland Determination forms were completed for wetland sites identified within the corridor. Additionally, MDT Field Evaluation forms were completed to assess the many functions and values attributable to wetlands. These materials and photographs of wetland sites may be found in MDT's Draft Biological Resources Report December 2000.

The wetlands evaluation was conducted for all wetlands along the proposed alignment for the new Craig Bridge and within the anticipated right-of-way corridor for the bridge and its approaches. Other areas along the existing alignment were evaluated based on the assumption that project-related activities could also occur there.

Three wetland sites were identified and delineated within the existing and proposed rights-of-way for this bridge replacement project. Wetland sites included narrow wetland fringes along the Missouri River (Wetland Sites 1 and 2) and a seasonally flooded emergent roadside ditch areas (Wetland Site 3). Roadside ditch wetlands are generally dominated by emergent species including wooly sedge, broad-leaf cattail, field horsetail, field mint, prickly lettuce, and Canada thistle. Representative species within the 2 m (6 feet) wide fringe wetlands are Lady's thumb, marsh speedwell, wooly sedge, common plantain, reed canarygrass, Kentucky bluegrass, and sandbar willow.

These wetlands rate as either Category III or IV according to the 1999 MDT Montana Wetland Assessment Method. Prominent functions included recreation potential (angling) at Wetlands 1 and 2 (riparian fringes) and possible groundwater discharge at Wetland 3 (roadside ditch). Wetland 3 provides few wetland functions or values and, because the ditch was apparently constructed through upland grassland, it may not be considered a jurisdictional wetland by the COE. The COE generally does not consider ditches excavated on dry land as jurisdictional waters of the United States. All sites are highly disturbed by residential and recreational activities, road maintenance activities, and the physical encroachment of the existing road and bridge.

Impacts of the Preferred Alternative. All of the wetland sites would be directly and permanently affected by the placement of fill for the new road or obliteration of the existing road. For purposes of impact analysis, a 15 m (49.2± feet) wide construction area was assumed for the bridge and its approaches at the east and west riverbanks. Obliteration and re-contouring of the existing east approach road, which would likely result in the loss of Wetland 3, was also assumed. Construction of the proposed project would result in the loss/disturbance of approximately 0.022 ha (0.05 acres) of wetlands.

Additional temporary impacts within the right-of-way and temporary construction easements may also occur (e.g., as a result of temporary work bridge construction). However, these impacts cannot be quantified because precise construction techniques/approaches are unknown at this time. It is assumed that any temporary impacts to wetlands within the right-of-way and construction easement areas would be restored to original contours and revegetated immediately following construction.

Cumulative Impacts. No cumulative impacts to wetlands are foreseen as a result of the proposed bridge replacement project and other present and future development activities in the project area.

Impacts of the No Build Alternative. This alternative would cause no further impacts to wetlands within the project area.

Mitigating Measures. The following measure would be implemented to minimize impacts to wetlands in the project corridor.

- *The design for the proposed bridge and its approaches would be developed to avoid or minimize encroachment into wetlands.*

- *If impacts to wetlands cannot be avoided, MDT would seek opportunities to provide replacement wetlands in the area of this proposed project.*

8. Impacts to Threatened and Endangered Wildlife

In accordance with *Section 7(a)* of the *ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT* **(16 U.S.C. 1531-1543)**, MDT contacted the USFWS for a list of endangered, threatened, proposed, and candidate species that could occur in the project area. MDT consulting biologists also assessed whether or not any of the Federally-listed threatened or endangered species or important habitat for the species occur in the project area. The species that could potentially occur in the Craig Bridge project area and other pertinent information about their habitats are shown in **TABLE 4-1**.

The Craig Bridge project is located within the historic habitats of the threatened grizzly bear and the endangered gray wolf and black-footed ferret. These species are believed to no longer be present in the Craig area and would not be affected by the proposed bridge replacement project.

The black-tailed prairie dog is a candidate for listing as a threatened or endangered species under the *ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT*. No prairie dog towns were observed during field visits and the nearest known towns are several kilometers away from the Craig Bridge project area.

Table 4-1: Species, Habitat, and Potential Occurrence of T/E Species in the Craig Bridge Project Area

Species Federal Status	Important Habitat	Potential Occurrence in Project Area
Bald Eagle *(Haliaeetus leucocephalus)* Threatened*	Coniferous forest, cottonwood riparian, aquatic areas	Present in Project Area - known nest sites within 2.4 km (1.5 miles) and 9 km (5.5 miles) respectively, of Craig Bridge. May occur as occasional breeding and non-breeding summer foragers, spring and fall migrants, and winter foragers.
Mountain Plover *(Charadrius montanus)* Proposed Threatened	Shortgrass prairie, flat topography with bare ground and clumps of vegetation or rocks. Mountain plovers are rarely near water.	Not Expected in Project Area - No heavily grazed short grass prairie or prairie dog towns (preferred habitat) occurs in immediate vicinity. No evidence of breeding or migrant activity in Craig area.
Interior Least Tern (*Sterna antillarum athalassos*) Endangered	Favor islands or sandbars along large rivers for nesting, sand must be mostly clear of vegetation to be used by terns. Least terns prefer shallow water for fishing.	Not Present in Project Area - known to occur along Missouri River with nearest occurrence in Fort Peck Lake area more than 400 km (250 miles) downstream of Craig.
Piping Plover *(Charadrius melodus)* Threatened	Plovers in the Great Plains make their nests on open, sparsely vegetated sand or gravel beaches adjacent to alkali wetlands, and on beaches, sand bars, and dredged material islands of major river systems.	Not Present in Project Area - known to occur along Missouri River in Fort Peck Lake area more than 400 km (250 miles) downstream of Craig and at Alkali Lake located more than 150 km (93 miles) northwest of Craig.

* On July 6, 1999, the bald eagle was proposed for removal from the Federal List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife. The bald eagle remains protected as a threatened species until de-listing is final.

Impacts of the Preferred Alternative. As indicated above, the only threatened, endangered, proposed, or candidate species that may occur in the Missouri River-Craig project area are the bald eagle and the mountain plover.

Impacts to threatened and endangered species can be categorized as direct or indirect effects and such effects may be short-term or long-term. Direct effects are **results** of the proposed action. Direct effects may include loss of habitat and mortality of individuals. Indirect effects are effects caused by the proposed action that are reasonably certain to occur. Primary indirect effects include potential disturbance and displacement of individuals, decrease in reproductive success, and habitat degradation. For many species, the magnitude of effects would depend on the timing and duration of construction activities.

The potential impacts associated with replacing the Craig Bridge on identified threatened and endangered species are described below.

☐ **Potential Impacts to Bald Eagles.** No bald eagle nest sites occur in the immediate project area, and no potential nest, perch, or roost habitat would be affected by the construction of the proposed bridge. However, two nest sites occur in the general project vicinity, both upstream of the existing bridge. An active bald eagle nest (known as the Craig nest) occurs about 2.4 km (1.5 miles) upstream of Craig and an inactive nest (the Prickly Pear nest) is known to occur about 9 km (6 miles) upstream of the project area. The nearest nest was active in 2000 and is known to have produced at least two young.

The *Habitat Management Guide For Bald Eagles In Northwestern Montana* (Montana Bald Eagle Working Group, 1991) defines three primary zones associated with bald eagle nests. The *nest site area* includes the area within 400 m (0.25 mile) of the existing and alternate nests. Eagles are most sensitive to human activity within this zone, and will react to intrusion. The *primary use area* includes the area heavily used by a nesting pair, or an 800 m (0.5 mile) radius from the occupied and alternate nests. The *home range* represents all areas used by the eagles during the nesting season. In the absence of site-specific data, the area within a 4 km (2.5 mile) radius should be considered as a minimum home range for nesting eagles. Based on these parameters, the project would be outside the nest site and primary use areas of the Craig nest, but would likely be within the home range of the eagles using the nest. The project is likely well outside the generally accepted home range of eagles that may use the Prickly Pear nest.

Construction activities during all seasons could conceivably temporarily disturb or displace eagles, including those on foraging excursions from the Craig nest. However, these impacts are not considered substantial because the disturbance would occur for only a limited time period and the area affected by the project is relatively confined and already highly disturbed. Similar and more attractive habitat for any displaced birds is abundant in the surrounding area. The immediate project area receives abundant human use during the nesting season for bald eagles. Due to substantial pedestrian (fishing) and boating use, the project area is unlikely to be a preferred foraging habitat for eagles from the Craig nest.

Bridge and pier construction and removal, along with soil exposure associated with project activities, would result in temporary increases in turbidity in the river downstream of the project. Water quality would be indirectly affected over the short-term by the influx of pollutants from unpaved surfaces during storm events. Increases in turbidity and suspended sediment could result in reductions of stream productivity and reduction of feeding opportunities for sight-feeding species, including bald eagles. These temporary impacts should be reduced by implementing standard best management practices for pollutant/sediment/erosion control during construction and through compliance with project-specific conditions associated with the *124SPA* Stream Protection Permit and COE *Section 404 CLEAN WATER ACT* permit required for the project.

☐ **Potential Impacts to Mountain Plovers.** Even though the project area contains some grazed grassland habitat that could be used by mountain plovers, there is no recent direct or indirect evidence of breeding or transient/migrant records for this species within the general vicinity of this project. No preferred habitat for mountain plovers (heavily-grazed short-grass prairie or prairie dog towns) occurs in the immediate project area and no mountain plovers were observed by biologists during visits to the project area.

For these reasons, and because the proposed construction area is immediately adjacent to the town of Craig, a heavily used boat launch facility, and existing transportation facilities, the grasslands east of the bridge provide only marginal nesting habitat for plovers. Due to the extent of human activities and levels of disturbance, mountain plovers would not be expected to nest in the immediate area of this bridge replacement project. Therefore, only minor impacts to low-quality potential nesting habitat are anticipated to result from project implementation.

Construction during spring and fall could conceivably temporarily disturb transient mountain plovers during stopovers along the project. However, it is anticipated that few, if any, plovers would be displaced during construction due to the relatively low potential for their occurrence in the project area. Additionally, similar habitat is abundant in the immediate vicinity and would provide ample habitat for displaced birds. Therefore, impacts to migrating mountain plovers resulting from construction of the project are considered to be negligible.

☐ **Cumulative Effects to Threatened and Endangered Species.** Project-associated impacts would occur in conjunction with ongoing residential, recreational, and agricultural activities and minor interstate highway improvement projects in the general vicinity. Overlay and slope-flattening projects are in progress or have been recently completed on Interstate 15 between the I-15/U.S. Highway 287 interchange north of Wolf Creek and Ulm. No substantial effects to threatened or endangered species were anticipated to date and none have been attributed to these projects. Due to the minor scope of this bridge project, substantial cumulative effects to threatened or endangered species are not expected, provided appropriate coordination measures are incorporated into this and future projects in the area.

No substantial cumulative effects to bald eagle use of the project or surrounding areas are expected to result from implementing the proposed project, if spatial and temporal construction restrictions are applied on future projects when warranted. Substantial cumulative effects to water quality in the Missouri River drainage are not expected if best management practices applied and water quality permit conditions are strictly enforced on this and future projects.

Cumulative/indirect impacts associated with the proposed action may result from increased human development in the general project area which could remove or degrade habitat and increase the risk of mortality to threatened and endangered species from illegal shooting, poisoning or other potentially lethal activities. Whether improved transportation and access at the Craig river crossing would combine with other factors to stimulate growth and result in the conversion of agricultural or natural lands into residential and commercial development is difficult to foresee. If not properly planned, growth and development could, in turn, result in loss or degradation of wetlands, wildlife and fish habitat, and other biological resources. It is not possible to quantify such potential cumulative/indirect impacts at this time. However, Lewis and Clark County has recently adopted a comprehensive land use plan in an effort to address such potential growth and development.

☐ **Determinations of Effect.** Based on the analysis of potential impacts to bald eagles and the implementation of appropriate coordination measures, MDT determined the proposed bridge replacement project is **not likely to adversely affect** the bald eagle.

Because mountain plovers are proposed for listing, a determination needs to be made about whether the proposed action would be likely to jeopardize its continued existence. According to the *Federal Register*, "jeopardize the continued existence of" means to engage in an action that reasonably would be expected, directly or indirectly, to reduce appreciably the likelihood of both the survival and recovery of a listed species in the wild by reducing the reproduction, numbers, or distribution of that species." Based on this definition, MDT concluded that implementation of the proposed bridge replacement is **not likely to jeopardize** the mountain plover.

If the plover is officially listed as a threatened species by the USFWS prior to construction of the new bridge and current conditions regarding the distribution or occurrence of the species does not change, the proposed project would **not affect** mountain plovers.

Coordination Measures. The coordination measures below would be implemented by MDT to ensure that adverse impacts to bald eagles are minimized or avoided:

- *Any overhead powerlines to be relocated should be raptor-proofed in accordance with Suggested Practices for Raptor Protection on Power Lines (Olendorff et al. 1981).*

- *The location of construction-related activities, such as staging and borrow/gravel source activities, should be reviewed by an MDT biologist prior to construction relative to their possible impacts to bald eagles.*

- *The project would comply with all state or federal water quality requirements and/or conditions.*

- *Berms or other accepted erosion/sedimentation control devices would be installed at the edges of wetlands and the Missouri River prior to construction.*

- *Construction equipment operating in or adjacent to the river and wetlands would be limited to that which is needed to perform the necessary work.*

- *Hazardous materials, including fuels and lubricating oils, would not be stored within 30 m (100 feet) of the river. Additionally, construction equipment would not be refueled within 30 m (100 feet) of the river.*

- *The status of bald eagle nesting in the Craig area would be confirmed with the MNHP or MDFWP prior to construction of the new bridge to determine if any need for spatial and timing restrictions on construction activities.*

The following coordination measure would ensure that impacts to mountain plovers are avoided or minimized:

- *The location of construction-related activities, such as borrow/gravel source activities, would be reviewed by an MDT biologist prior to construction relative to their possible impacts to mountain plovers.*

Impacts of the No Build Alternative. The No Build Alternative would result in no new impacts to the threatened bald eagle or the proposed for listing mountain plover.

9. Impacts to Other Wildlife Resources and Fisheries

General Wildlife Resources. According to MDT's Biological Resources Report, the habitats in the Craig area support an abundant and diverse population of wildlife species. The project area provides year-round habitat for big game species such as white-tailed and mule deer, and pronghorn antelope. Habitat for fur-bearing mammals like the North American badger, bobcat, long-tailed weasel, mink, red fox, coyote, raccoon, striped skunk, muskrat, and North American beaver exists in the project area and these species are occasionally found there. A variety of other small mammals (mice, shrews, voles, bats, rabbits, chipmunks and squirrels, gophers, and porcupines) are also likely to occur in the vicinity of Craig.

The MNHP has compiled more than 93 different species observations for the Craig area since 1994. Birds commonly observed in the project area include house sparrow, American robin, Brewers blackbird, house finch, American crow, mountain bluebird, and American white pelicans. Cliff swallow nest structures exist beneath the existing bridge. Red-tailed hawks and bald eagles can commonly be seen near Craig.

Emergent vegetation along the river provides limited nesting cover and brood rearing habitat for waterfowl. Even though the bridge area is the site of extensive human activities, waterfowl nesting likely occurs in the general area. Canada geese, blue-winged teal, northern shoveler, and gadwalls are known to breeding in the general project area. Other waterfowl species like cranes, great blue herons, mallards, and mergansers are commonly seen on or near the Missouri River.

Amphibians that could be found in the project area include the western toad, western chorus frog, and northern leopard frog. Reptiles known to occur in the Craig area include painted turtles, racers, gopher snakes, western rattlesnakes, and common garter snakes.

Fisheries. The Missouri River in the project area is a nationally renowned fishery managed by the MDFWP as a trout stream. The reach of the Missouri River from the confluence of Little Prickly Pear Creek to Stickney Creek has been rated as "outstanding" or Class 1 for its fisheries resource values. The Missouri River at this location receives heavy use by anglers.

The Montana River Information System (MRIS) indicates that abundant or commonly found species in this reach of the Missouri include mountain whitefish, rainbow trout, brown trout, white sucker, mottled sculpin, longnose sucker, and longnose dace. Other fish species that may occur in this reach are kokanee, common carp, yellow perch, burbot, flathead chub, walleye, and stonecat. Most of these species are year-round residents. Westslope cutthroat trout, a sensitive fish species, may pass through the project area on extremely rare occasions.

Rare and Sensitive Wildlife Species. The MNHP was contacted for information on the occurrence of wildlife species in the project area listed by the agency as rare, unique to a region of the state, threatened, or endangered throughout their range in Montana, vulnerable to extinction in Montana, or in need of further research. Rare and sensitive species are typically not protected as threatened or endangered under the federal *ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT*.

A search of the MNHP database identified the occurrence of only one species of concern, the bald eagle, within several kilometers of the proposed bridge replacement project. As indicated previously, an active bald eagle nest exists within 2.4 km (1.5 miles) of the project area.

Although no records of occurrence exist, several other animals listed as species of concern by the MNHP could potentially occur near Craig. These species include the northern leopard frog, western toad, American white pelican, black-crowned night heron, ferruginous hawk, black-necked stilt, and common tern.

Impacts of the Preferred Alternative on Wildlife. In general, the effects on wildlife associated with the construction of the proposed bridge and its approaches would include: the temporary loss of and avoidance of habitats adjacent to the construction area; the potential for direct mortality from vehicles and construction equipment; and permanent habitat degradation and/or displacement.

The approaches to the proposed bridge would be constructed following a new alignment. The construction of the approach roadway and its foundation would result in the permanent loss of a minor amount of habitat for birds, small mammals, and reptiles along the proposed alignment. Birds and other wildlife that rely upon the affected area for habitat would be temporarily displaced during construction due to noise and human activities. Some shrubs or small trees adjacent to the river could be lost which would eliminate a small number of perching or nesting sites for birds. Other species of wildlife that may occasionally use the project area (e.g., big game and fur-bearers) would likely avoid the project area during construction due to the noise and human presence.

Construction activities could also result in mortalities of some less mobile wildlife species if individuals are unable to escape construction equipment.

Impacts of the Preferred Alternative on Fisheries and Aquatic Resources. The impacts of the Preferred Alternative on the Missouri River fishery would likely be minor. The most likely period for affecting the local fishery would be when river banks are disturbed to build new abutments and during pier construction within the channel. These activities could cause temporary, adverse effects to water quality by increasing turbidity. Sediments from the river bank could be washed into the river by precipitation events and the channel bottom would be disturbed to create footings for the new bridge piers. The potential for temporary increases in turbidity and other water quality impacts from construction activities would be reduced by implementing measures to control the transport of sediments and other pollutants during construction.

Many fish species are very sensitive to sediment, particularly in spawning areas. A spawning area for trout (primarily rainbow trout) occurs approximately 250 m (820 feet) downstream of the existing Craig Bridge. Instream construction or bridge demolition activities conducted within the river during spawning or embryonic development would have the potential for disrupting reproductive activity in this location.

A minor amount of habitat for fish would be permanently lost since three new piers would be built within the channel; however, no permanent losses of spawning habitat for any fish species would occur. Fish movements would not be inhibited by the proposed bridge replacement.

If the old bridge is removed instead of being adopted in-place, blasting may be required to reduce the existing concrete piers to rubble to facilitate their removal. Blasting would have short-term adverse effects on fish and other aquatic organisms and their habitats. The shock waves and rapid changes in hydrostatic pressure associated with the detonation of explosives in or near water could stun, injure or kill fish species in the immediate vicinity of the demolition activity. The use of explosives may also cause some temporary changes to fish habitat. Blasting to demolish piers could elevate sediment levels downstream from the piers and may reduce or eliminate bottom-dwelling life forms that some fish use for food. The use of explosives to demolish bridge piers would not introduce chemical by-products into the river at concentrations that would be toxic to fish and other aquatic biota.

Impacts of the Preferred Alternative on Rare and Sensitive Species. Sensitive wildlife species most likely to be temporarily affected by project construction are those that may associate directly with the river, including the western toad, northern leopard frog, American white pelican, bald eagle, black-crowned night heron, and common tern. No species of special concern have been recorded in the specific project corridor in recent years, and, with the exception of American white pelicans, none were observed during a field reconnaissance survey by MDT's biological resources consultant.

The only rare and sensitive species known to occur in the project area are the milk snake and the leopard frog. It is possible that the project could directly impact (e.g., mortality or displacement) a milk snake or leopard frog if they are occupying habitat in the project area at the time of construction. Any loss is unlikely to affect the status of either the milk snake or leopard frog. Globally, the milk snake is demonstrably secure; and the leopard frog is of concern primarily in western Montana, but remains common in southeastern Montana.

Cumulative Impacts. No adverse cumulative effects to wildlife or fisheries are anticipated as a result of the proposed bridge replacement at Craig and other present and future development activities in the project area.

Mitigating Measures. In addition to the Conservation Measures for threatened or endangered species described earlier, MDT would implement the following measures to ensure that adverse impacts to wildlife and aquatic species are minimized or avoided.

- *MDFWP has requested that the new bridge be designed such that: 1) does not decrease the width of the river channel; 2) provides adequate elevation (freeboard) to prevent formation of a trapezoidal channel; and 3) perpetuates the existing MDFWP boat launch at the Craig FAS.*

- *MDT has already coordinated proposed work in the stream channel with the MDFWP. Continued coordination would occur to establish desirable times and any other special requirements for construction activities within the channel (including blasting to demolish existing bridge piers) that might cause harm to aquatic species or their aquatic habitats.*

  MDFWP has indicated that the fall months would likely be the most desirable period for in-stream construction. This would also coincide with a common practice of conducting in-stream activities during low water periods in order to minimize downstream sedimentation impacts. The final in-stream timing restrictions would be determined during the 124SPA permitting process.

- *Best management practices for erosion control would be applied in the project area to minimize sediment transport to the Missouri River.*

Impacts of the No Build Alternative. This alternative would cause no further impacts to wildlife, fisheries, or aquatic resources in the Craig Bridge project area.

C. Impacts to the Human and Cultural Environment

1. Land Ownership and Use Impacts

Land Ownership. The western end of the project area is within the platted townsite of Craig. With the exception of the state-owned Craig Fishing Access Site (FAS) and public road rights-of-way, all lands within the Craig Bridge project area are under private ownership. The townsite of Craig consists of many small parcels under various private ownerships. Lands on the east side of the Missouri River are within a large ranch owned by the Sterling Ranch Company.

Existing Land Uses. The community of Craig consists of a concentrated area of single-family residences with scattered commercial developments along the county road (Bridge Street) and Main Street, which parallels the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad tracks. The townsite of Craig includes about 45 residences, one convenience store, two bar/restaurants, and two recreational outfitters and guide services. The Craig FAS sits on a 1.02 ha (2.53 acre) parcel of State of Montana land located immediately south of the county road and adjacent Missouri River. The Craig FAS provides a location for public access to the river and for extended camping. Lands east of the Missouri River within the project area are irrigated and used to raise hay and forage crops for livestock. In the past, this land has also been used as pastureland for horses and cattle.

Applicable Land Use Plans. Lewis and Clark County has an adopted Comprehensive Plan to guide land use and development on all lands in the county. The County adopted its first Comprehensive Plan in 1983 and completed an update of the document in 1989. The Plan is focused on the Helena Valley area although rural areas of the county are also included. In 1997, Lewis and Clark County began the process to update the County Comprehensive Plan and establish specific area plans for other rural parts of the County, including the Wolf Creek-Craig Planning Area. This planning process has not yet been completed.

The Lewis and Clark County Commissioners and the County Planning Board are the responsible entities for implementing the comprehensive plan. The State of Montana primarily manages public lands along the Missouri River for public access for water-based recreation activities.

Impacts of the Preferred Alternative. The proposed construction of a new bridge at Craig would impact minor amounts of land adjacent to the existing county road. With the exception of developed lands within Craig, nearly all of the affected land is used for agricultural purposes.

The proposed projects would not adversely affect commercial, residential, or recreational developments along the roadway in Craig. Access to these adjacent land uses would be perpetuated. The reconstructed west approach to the crossing would encroach on a residential property located immediately northwest of the existing bridge. Although the proposed project would not acquire the residence, some existing trees within the property would have to be removed to accommodate the new road's alignment.

The proposed project would have little, if any, impact to the Craig FAS. Minor reconstruction of Bridge Street would occur within the existing county road right-of-way along the north side of the recreation site. Since the elevation of the proposed west approach to the new bridge would be slightly higher than the existing county road, some minor regrading may be required at the existing approach to the FAS. However, there would be no permanent conversion of land within the recreation site to new right-of-way.

The proposed east approach to the new bridge would be constructed through agricultural land and new right-of-way would be needed from the landowner. Minor amounts of pasture and cropland would be lost and modifications would be necessary to field access locations along the new east approach to the bridge.

This proposed bridge replacement has been advanced at the request of Lewis and Clark County. The provision of a new bridge at Craig would not be inconsistent with the County's Comprehensive Plan.

As indicated earlier, it appears the existing Craig Bridge may be adopted in-place. Although firm plans for the old bridge do not exist yet, the group interested in the structure apparently intends to preserve the historic bridge and wishes to make the structure available for use by pedestrians and other forms of non-motorized transportation. Depending how the group intends to use the old structure, it is conceivable that some changes in land uses and/or circulation patterns near the bridge could occur in the future. However, it is impossible to predict what land use changes, if any, may result from the adoption of the historic bridge or what effects such changes might have on lands near the crossing.

Cumulative Impacts. The planned highway improvements would not encourage new or undesirable growth and development and would not substantially change property values in the Craig area. This conclusion was reached because MDT proposes to build a new bridge to replace an existing structure and this action alone would not cause more people or businesses to move to the Craig area. If growth were to occur in Craig, it would be due to other reasons than the provision of a new bridge. The proposed bridge is not being built to induce growth.

Simply replacing the old structure would also not be expected to cause a substantial increase in traffic since most motorists choosing to cross the river at Craig already use the existing bridge. MDT anticipates that traffic at this crossing would continue to increase by 2.8% per year over the foreseeable future with or without a new bridge.

Impacts of the No Build Alternative. This alternative would cause no changes to existing land uses in Craig or along the existing county road within the project area.

2. Right-of-Way and Utilities Impacts

The existing bridge and its approaches (Bridge Street in the Craig townsite and the county road east of the bridge) have been developed within a right-of-way corridor approximately 18 m (60 feet) wide. Adjacent properties are accessible from the county road.

A railroad crossing for the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway line and passing siding exists on Bridge Street near the west end of the proposed project. An overhead power line crosses the river upstream from the present bridge and underground telephone lines exist in the vicinity of this project. Telephone lines cross the river via an attachment to the structure of the Craig Bridge.

Other than the Craig FAS, no other state or federal lands exist in the project area.

Impacts of the Preferred Alternative. Construction of the Preferred Alternative would require an estimated 1.46 ha (3.60 acres) of new right-of-way from adjacent lands. The Preferred Alternative would not relocate any residences or businesses. All lands needed for right-of-way from private ownerships on this proposed project would be acquired by MDT in accordance with both the *UNIFORM RELOCATION ASSISTANCE AND REAL PROPERTY ACT OF 1970* (**P.L. 91-646**) and the *UNIFORM RELOCATION ACT AMENDMENTS* of 1987 (**P.L. 100-17**). Compensation for right-of-way acquisitions is made at "fair market value" for the "highest and best use" of the land.

The right-of-way acquired for this proposed project would be conveyed to Lewis and Clark County upon completion of the proposed project. The portion of the existing route to be abandoned would be obliterated after construction of the new bridge and its approaches. Ownership of the abandoned road and its former right-of-way area would revert to adjoining landowners.

The State of Montana considers the Missouri River to be commercially navigable from its headwaters near Three Forks to the North Dakota state line. As such, the State claims ownership of the Missouri River between the low water marks on each bank. Therefore, under **70-16-201** and **70-1-202, M.C.A.**, the MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES & CONSERVATION (DNRC) has jurisdiction over the Missouri River and there is a need to acquire permanent right-of-way for a new river crossing from the State of Montana.

MDT is presently evaluating the need for a small storm water retention pond near the west end of the new bridge. Roadside ditches with adequately sized drainage culverts would be provided along the new east approach to the bridge.

The existing railroad crossing near the west end of the existing and proposed new bridge would be upgraded or replaced. MDT would evaluate the need for warning lights and automatic gates at the existing railroad crossing. These features would be included only if specific warrants for their use are met.

Utilities in conflict with the proposed bridge replacement and the new approaches to the structure would be relocated prior to construction. It should be noted that if the existing bridge is left in place, the potential for conflicts with existing utilities may be reduced since there would be no need to move power and telephone lines attached to the old bridge.

Cumulative Impacts. Except for the incremental and minor loss of important farmland in Lewis and Clark County mentioned earlier in this Part, no other cumulative impacts are foreseen from the proposed right-of-way acquisition for the proposed bridge replacement project. The utility relocations that may be required could motivate utility providers to update or make other improvements to their facilities within the project corridor.

Impacts of the No Build Alternative - The No Build Alternative would not require any additional right-of-way, affect existing utilities, or result in the relocation of residents or businesses in the Craig area.

Mitigating Measures. The following measures would be implemented to minimize the right-of-way and utilities impacts associated with the proposed highway improvements:

- *MDT's Right-of-Way design for each project would attempt to minimize the area required for the new highway and potential effects on adjoining landowners. Temporary construction permits would be used when possible to minimize the need for new right-of-way.*
- *MDT would coordinate with the appropriate utility companies prior to construction to determine the timing and details of relocating conflicting utilities.*

3. Transportation/Circulation Impacts

As described in detail in Part II, the existing bridge and its approaches have physical deficiencies that contribute to reduced safety for users of this county road. The existing bridge has a severely restricted load limit, a deck that accommodates only one lane of traffic, and overhead clearance limitations.

The Craig Bridge and the adjoining county road serve residences and businesses in Craig, area ranchers, and recreational visitors traveling between I-15 and the Recreation Road. MDT anticipates that traffic volumes at the Missouri River crossing will continue to grow and that the ADT on this section of county road may increase by nearly 75% over the next twenty years.

Impacts of the Preferred Alternative. The provision of a new bridge at Craig would provide a safer and a more efficient facility for road users and increase the convenience of crossing the river for local residents and other visitors to the area. The new bridge and its approaches would address traffic safety issues by: 1) increasing the width of the bridge and roadway; 2) accommodating all legal loads; 3) eliminating sight distance problems across the bridge; and 4) providing facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists on the structure. The proposed bridge and its approaches would be reconstructed to MDT standards that reflect designs appropriate for both the type and level of traffic using the highway facilities.

No long-term changes to overall travel patterns would be likely due to the provision of a new bridge at Craig. Traffic volumes on the county road would not be expected to substantially increase over present conditions since most motorists choosing to cross the river at Craig already use the existing bridge. However, vehicles previously restricted from the crossing due to their overall height or weight would be able to use the new bridge. The number of new river crossings by previously restricted vehicles at Craig would be insignificant due to the number of nearby river crossings and convenient access for large vehicles to and from I-15.

Traffic circulation through the area would be enhanced over existing conditions since the new bridge would allow two-way simultaneous travel by all vehicles across the new bridge. This operational change would make travel in the Craig area more efficient since road users would no longer experience delays waiting for other vehicles to cross the bridge.

Oversize and taller than normal vehicles could also use the new bridge instead of traveling to alternate river crossings with less restrictive bridges. This would make travel more efficient for these road users. Response times during emergencies would be lessened since alternate crossings north or south of Craig would no longer have to be used by large emergency vehicles or other equipment. The new bridge would also accommodate use by school busses if these vehicles were previously restricted from using the existing bridge.

Cumulative Impacts. The proposed bridge project would not encourage new or undesirable growth in the Craig area. This conclusion was reached because the action of building a new bridge to replace an existing structure by itself would not cause more people or businesses to move to the Craig area. If growth were to occur in Craig, it would be the result of factors other than simply providing a new bridge.

The provision of a new bridge capable of two-way traffic in itself would not generate a large increase in travel to the area but would likely cause a slight redistribution of river crossings by motorists passing through the area. As indicated earlier in this Part, MDT anticipates that traffic at this crossing would continue to increase by 2.8% per year over the foreseeable future with or without a new bridge.

Impacts of the No Build Alternative. The No Build Alternative would not change current operational or traffic safety conditions on the county road at Craig.

Mitigating Measures. The following measures would be incorporated into the proposed project to minimize impacts to traffic and circulation:

- *MDT would maintain traffic through the project area during construction by allowing continued use of the existing bridge. When the new bridge and its approaches are completed, traffic would be diverted to the new alignment.*

- *MDT would ensure that access to properties adjacent to the county road is maintained throughout the construction period.*

- *Delays to traffic during construction would be minimized.*

4. Social Impacts/Environmental Justice

Population. Craig's population likely peaked during the first half of the twentieth century when the Great Northern Railway maintained a "section base" for maintenance crews and the town served as an important shipping point for livestock from area ranches. Over the last fifty years, the town's population continued to decline as state highways bypassed the community, area farms and ranches became consolidated, and as the railroad's presence in the community declined. While the State and the County have continued to show notable population increases since 1970, Craig's population has remained relatively stable over the same period.

Because Craig is an unincorporated community, there is no established boundary for census purposes. Estimates based on data from the last Census suggest that the town site of Craig had approximately 50 full-time residents in 1990. Craig's current population is estimated to be between 50 and 60 full-time residents. The absence of job opportunities and distance to commercial centers has likely discouraged new persons from moving into the Craig area. However, seasonal population increases are experienced in this area due to second home and recreational home development along the Missouri River corridor north of Craig.

The Draft Comprehensive Plan for Lewis and Clark County projects the overall population of the County to grow at an annual rate of 1.67 percent through the year 2010. Based on historic growth patterns, Craig's population is unlikely to increase at a rate similar to that anticipated for the County over the next decade unless significant social or economic changes occur in the area (www.helenair.com/compplan/dem_eco.pdf). At this time; there is no indication that economic conditions or other factors influencing population growth in this part of Lewis and Clark County will change.

Population and Economic Characteristics. Detailed population and socio-economic data for residents of Lewis and Clark County is periodically collected and distributed by the U.S. BUREAU OF THE CENSUS and the Montana Census and Economic Information Center of the MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE. Based on data from these sources, the following characteristics are evident for county residents:

- Minorities were estimated to comprise about 3.5% of the County's population in 1999.
- About 12.0% of the County's residents were estimated to be 65 or older in 1999.
- The 1995 median household income was estimated to be $33,991.
- The estimated per capita personal income was $23,600 in 1998.
- Some 12.6% of all persons had incomes below the poverty level in 1995.
- The average household size was 2.47 persons in 1990.

Detailed data from the 2000 Census is not yet available to describe these same population and economic characteristics for the residents of Craig and its surrounding area.

Other Community Characteristics and Services. The following text describes other characteristics of the Craig area and lists available community services.

- **Education.** School age children in the Craig project area attend schools in Craig, Helena, or Cascade. The community has an elementary school for grades K-6 with an average enrollment of approximately 20 students. Middle and High School students from the project area attend school in the Helena School District. Due to the distance to school in Helena, many area students attend high school in the Town of Cascade.

- **Emergency Services.** Law enforcement within the Craig area is a cooperative effort between three different agencies. The Lewis and Clark County Sheriffs Department has the primary responsibility for law enforcement in this rural area. The Montana Highway Patrol is responsible for law enforcement on Interstate 15 and other state roads. Game wardens from the MDFWP are responsible for enforcing fish, game and boating regulations and to assist other law enforcement official as needed. Fire protection services are provided by the Wolf Creek - Craig Volunteer Fire Department. Emergency services are dispatched from a central location in the County by calling 911.

- **Water Supply and Sewage Disposal.** There are no public sewer or water facilities located in the Craig area. Wastewater treatment is generally provided by individual on-site septic systems and water is generally provided by on-site wells.
- **Utilities.** Electrical power is provided in the planning area by the Montana Power Company. Telephone service is provided by US West Communications. Natural gas is not available in the planning area.
- **Postal Service.** The nearest Post Office is located in Wolf Creek.

Impacts of the Preferred Alternative. Executive Order 12898, *Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority and Low-Income Populations*, signed by President Clinton in 1994, has been observed for this proposed project. This proposed action would not have any significant impact on the location, distribution, density or growth rate of the population of the Craig area or Lewis and Clark County. The proposed bridge project would not adversely affect any social or ethnic groups and it would not isolate or divide existing residential areas. Thus alternative would not cause disproportionately high adverse human health or environmental effects on minority and low-income populations. The proposed projects would also comply with the provisions of *TITLE VI* of the *CIVIL RIGHTS ACT* (**42 U.S.C. 2000d**, as amended) under the FHWA's regulations (23 CFR 200).

The proposed project would not affect the provision of community services in the Craig area. As stated previously, a river crossing without load or height restrictions would benefit the providers of emergency services and bus transportation for area students.

Cumulative Impacts. The proposed bridge project would not result in any cumulative effects on the overall population of the Craig area or any particular social or ethnic groups.

Impacts of the No Build Alternative. This alternative would not require the acquisition of land for right-of-way and would not displace households, businesses, or other areas used for human activities. Taking no action would not influence population growth or distribution in or near the project area.

5. Economic Impacts

Sheep and cattle ranching and the railroad provided the impetus for Craig's initial development. Recreational activities now provide a significant economic base and several businesses located in Craig cater to visitors and provide guide and outfitting services for sportsmen. Vacation and retirement homes are scattered throughout Craig. Agriculture remains an important economic activity to residents in this part of the Missouri River valley.

Impacts of the Preferred Alternative. The proposed project would improve the quality of travel on an important road in Lewis and Clark County. Improvement of the river crossing could result in a slight increase in travel that could indirectly benefit local businesses, as additional road users would have the opportunity to stop in Craig to purchase goods and services.

Temporary jobs could be created during the construction of a new bridge at Craig. Also, the demand for local goods and services (food, lodging, recreation, etc.) would be increased in Craig due to the presence of workers temporarily living in the area. These beneficial economic impacts would be sustained for one to two years required to build the proposed bridge. Local spending by construction workers may cause a slight increase in the local tax revenues. This impact would likely be small and short-term.

The Preferred Alternative would require about 1.46 ha (3.60 acres) of new right-of-way from adjacent landowners. Right-of-way acquisition would permanently remove this minor amount of property from the tax rolls and taxes paid on the land would be lost to Lewis and Clark County. This loss in property tax revenue would have a negligible effect on revenues for the County and would likely be offset if abandoned sections of road and right-of-way reverted to adjoining landowners upon the completion of this proposed project.

The proposed bridge project would not adversely affect or cause notable long-term changes to the economy of Lewis and Clark County or Craig. There would be no commercial relocations or land acquisitions that would affect the viability of agricultural operations or commercial businesses within the project area.

Cumulative Impacts. The cumulative economic impacts of the proposed bridge replacement at Craig together with known or anticipated developments in the project area would be negligible. Replacing the existing bridge with a new structure by itself would not cause more people or businesses to move to the Craig area.

Impacts of the No Build Alternative. This alternative would not change economic conditions or cause any new economic impacts to residents or businesses in the project area. Lewis and Clark County would still be obligated to budget funds to maintain the existing facility or perform spot improvements.

Eventually, if the bridge were never replaced, it would likely fail and would have to be removed. If this were to occur, the impacts to businesses, while impossible to calculate, would be severe. Local businesses could experience adverse economic impacts for several years since the crossing would be closed while a new bridge was being designed and constructed.

Mitigating Measures. The following measures would be implemented to minimize economic impacts of the proposed project:

- *MDT would maintain traffic through the project area during construction by allowing continued use of the existing bridge.*
- *Access to agricultural lands adjacent to the projects and businesses located within Craig would be perpetuated during the construction of the new bridge.*

6. Noise Impacts

Noise levels associated with traffic are often a concern at locations along highways where highway traffic noise may affect frequent human activities. Noise-sensitive land uses in the project area include the Craig FAS and a few residences adjacent to the roadway. These land uses fall within Activity Category B according the Noise Abatement Criteria (NAC) listed in 23 CFR 772. Commercial establishments and other developed uses in the vicinity fall under Activity Category C.

According to the NAC, the generally established maximum exterior noise levels is 67 dBA Leq(h) for Category B uses and 72 dBA Leq(h) for Category C uses. The term dBA Leq(h) refers to equivalent hourly noise level (in decibels on the A-weighted scale). Undeveloped rural lands are considered to be in Activity Category D and the NAC does not specify an associated maximum noise level for this category.

Impacts of the Preferred Alternative. Detailed noise analyses are required only for projects that would build a highway on a new location, physically alter the existing roadway to significantly change its horizontal or vertical alignment, or increase the number of through traffic lanes. According to MDT's "Noise Policy," a significant change in alignment would occur if the horizontal distance between the highway centerline and the noise receiver was halved or if changes in the profile of the road are 6 m (20 ft) or more.

This project involves reconstruction of a bridge and its approaches with very minor changes in horizontal alignment, particularly near homes, businesses, and recreation sites in Craig that may be sensitive to changes in noise levels. MDT did not perform a detailed noise analysis because the project would not cause a significant change in the horizontal alignment of the existing highway and it would increase the number of through traffic lanes only on the new structure.

Due to the low traffic volumes and travel speeds (sometimes idling or stopping) on the west approach to the bridge, it is reasonable to conclude that existing noise levels are well below the NAC maximum exterior noise levels at sensitive locations in the project area. Traffic noise is not a concern on the vacant agricultural lands along the east approach to the bridge. Traffic noise level increases would be insignificant with the implementation of the Preferred Alternative and Design Year noise levels would not be expected to exceed the Noise Abatement Criteria 23 CFR 772.

The operation of heavy equipment during the construction of the proposed bridge and its approaches would generate noise and vibrations noticeable to local residents or businesses near the work site. Pile drivers, cranes, road grading equipment, and portable generators would be likely sources of construction-related noise. Noise and vibration effects would be temporary and would occur at various times during the construction period.

Cumulative Impacts. The proposed bridge project at Craig would not result in any cumulative noise impacts.

Mitigating Measures. The following measure would be implemented to minimize potential noise impacts associated with construction of the proposed bridge.

- *MDT would consult with MDFWP to determine if the hours of construction activity for the new bridge should be restricted due to the presence of campsites at the Craig FAS.*

Impacts of the No Build Alternative. This alternative would cause no further noise impacts within the Craig project area.

7. Hazardous Materials/Substances

Hazardous materials are products or wastes regulated by the U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (EPA) or the Montana Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ). These include substances regulated under the *COMPREHENSIVE EMERGENCY RESPONSE, COMPENSATION, AND LIABILITY ACT* (CERCLA of Superfund), the *RESOURCE CONSERVATION AND RECOVERY ACT* (RCRA), and regulations for solid waste management, above-ground storage tanks (ASTs) and underground storage tanks (USTs).

No National Priority List (NPL) or Superfund sites identified by the EPA are located in or near the Craig Bridge project area. A recent (4-19-00) list of the EPA's RCRA regulated treatment, storage, and disposal facilities and hazardous waste generators was reviewed to determine if any such facilities exist in the project area. No EPA-listed handlers of hazardous waste are located in Craig. MDT also reviewed the project area in July 1999 and concluded there are no potential issues concerning hazardous substances on or adjacent to this proposed project.

Due to the age of the existing bridge, lead paint is likely to have been used on the structure.

Impacts of the Preferred Alternative. The only known source of hazardous wastes for the proposed project would be associated with the equipment used for construction of the new roadway and its related features. These are the fuels, lubricants, hydraulic fluids, and related items needed for the contractor's vehicles and equipment. A slight risk of the release of these hazardous fluids exists since vehicles and heavy equipment would be operating within the project area throughout the construction period.

Special provisions for salvaging and disposing of any treated timbers from the existing railroad crossing would be included in the contract plans for the project. Disposal of non-salvageable and left-over materials would be in accordance with all applicable laws, rules, and regulations, including the *MONTANA SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT ACT.*

Cumulative Impacts. The cumulative impacts of the generation and handling of hazardous materials for the proposed bridge project together with other developments in the area would be negligible.

Mitigating Measures. The following measures would be implemented to minimize the potential for hazardous materials impacts:

- *The contractor for the project would be required to store fuel and other hazardous materials away from surface waters and wetlands to reduce the potential adverse effects of an accidental spill.*

- *The contractors for the projects would be required to plan for and implement containment procedures in response to any accidental spills of fuel or other hazardous materials.*

Impacts of the No Build Alternative. This alternative would have no impacts on hazardous waste sites, generators, or substances. A low potential for the release of hazardous fluids exists since the County would operate trucks and other heavy equipment during the performance of required maintenance activities on the bridge and its approaches.

Due to the likelihood that lead paint was used, special procedures would be required during future painting of the old structure to properly collect and dispose of any paint stripped from the bridge.

8. Impacts to Archaeological and Historical Resources

Cultural resources are protected by the *NATIONAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION ACT OF 1966*, as amended **(16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.)**. This law and its implementing regulations require the identification and evaluation of significant historical resources that a project may impact. It further requires that such resources be avoided, if possible, or when avoidance is not possible, that any adverse effects on the resources be mitigated. Coordination is also required with the MONTANA STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE (SHPO) and the ADVISORY COUNCIL ON HISTORIC PRESERVATION (ACHP).

During April 2000, a cultural resources consultant performed an archaeological survey and a historic survey of buildings and structures within the area of potential effect for this project. The archaeological surveys did not locate any sites within the project area. However, the historic survey identified the existing Craig Bridge and recorded four other historical properties within the Craig town site. The newly recorded sites included two commercial buildings, a residence, and a segment of the former Great Northern Railway main line. The historical properties were fully inventoried to determine site significance and their eligibility for listing in the NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES (NRHP). Based on the evaluations of these properties, only the Great Northern Railway main line was determined to be eligible for the NRHP. The Craig Bridge was previously evaluated and found to be eligible for the NRHP.

TABLE 4-2 lists all cultural sites recorded within the Craig Bridge project area and presents their NRHP-eligibility status.

Table 4-2: Cultural Sites in the Missouri River - Craig Project Area

Site Number	Name/Description	NHRP Eligible?
24LC129	Craig Bridge -- historic bridge (previously recorded in 1979)	Eligible (1986)
24LC1638	Craig Bar -commercial building (recorded in April 2000)	Not Eligible
24LC1639	Craig Mercantile - commercial building (recorded in April 2000)	Not Eligible
24 LC1640	Great Northern Railway Agent's House (recorded in April 2000)	Not Eligible
24LC1641	Great Northern Railway Main Line (recorded in April 2000)	Eligible

SHPO concurred with NRHP eligibility determinations for cultural sites recorded in the Craig Bridge project area on May 1, 2001. A copy of SHPO's letter is contained in **APPENDIX B**.

The Recreation Road (old U.S. Highway 91), at the eastern terminus of the proposed project, was nominated for inclusion in MDT's Roads and Historic Bridges Preservation Plan. The roadway is the original alignment of U.S. Highway 91 through portions of Lewis and Clark County and Cascade County. The Recreation Road, built in the early 1930s, still retains its original design features and associated bridges including the Missouri River Bridge at Craig (24LC129).

Federally-funded actions affecting historic bridges or other sites that are on, or considered as eligible for the NRHP also must comply with *Section 4(f)* of the *U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION Act* of 1966, as amended (**49 U.S.C. 303**).

Impacts of the Preferred Alternative on the Craig Bridge. Lewis and Clark County has stated it no longer wants the maintenance responsibility or continued liability for the historic Craig Bridge. Based on this stated position, the possibilities for the future disposition of the historic bridge are limited to: 1) demolishing and salvaging the existing bridge; 2) finding an interested party to adopt the structure in-place; or 3) finding an interested party to remove and reuse the bridge elsewhere.

The Highway Bridge Replacement and Rehabilitation Program for Historic Bridge Preservation requires states proposing the demolition of historic bridges as part of a replacement project (under **23 U.S.C. 144(o)(4)**, as amended) to make the bridges available to a state or local entity or to a responsible private entity. As a condition of adoption, the new owner must: 1) enter into an agreement to maintain the bridge and features that preserve its historical significance; and 2) assume all future legal and financial responsibilities for the structure, including an agreement to hold MDT and the County harmless in any liability action and for any structural problems or lead paint associated with the bridge.

In accordance with the Highway Bridge Replacement and Rehabilitation Program, the Craig Bridge was offered to potential new owners under the Adopt-A-Bridge Program specified in

MDT's Roads and Historic Bridges Preservation Plan. Following advertisements for adoption in local newspapers and public service announcements, six parties initially expressed interest in the old structure. Those interested in adopting the old bridge were asked to submit formal proposals to MDT during March 2001. The only proposal received by MDT prior to its submittal deadline was from an individual who wanted to remove the Craig Bridge and reuse the structure on private land elsewhere in the area.

Shortly after the deadline, a group from Helena interested in adopting the bridge in-place contacted MDT. The group requested additional time to work out the details of assuming liability for the old bridge. After discussing the proposal to adopt the structure in-place with the party that wanted to remove the bridge, it was agreed that the group should be afforded the opportunity to fully develop a plan to adopt the structure. If this proposal falls through, MDT would offer the bridge to the individual wishing to dismantle and use the old bridge elsewhere.

The Preferred Alternative would have no adverse effect to the Craig Bridge if efforts to adopt the structure in-place are successful and if the new owners care for the bridge in a manner that maintain its historic integrity. This determination was made because the setting of the existing historic structure would not be substantially altered by the presence of a new bridge immediately downstream. MDT submitted this determination to the Montana SHPO in a letter dated April 6, 2001. On May 1, 2001, the SHPO tentatively concurred with this Determination of Effect. A copy of MDT's letter with SHPO's concurrence stamp can be found in **APPENDIX D**.

The Preferred Alternative would have an adverse effect to the historic bridge if the existing structure were removed and used at another location following the construction of the new bridge. Although the new owner of the bridge would be required to maintain the historical features of the bridge to the extent possible, the bridge would be placed in a different setting.

The Preferred Alternative would also have an adverse effect to the Craig Bridge if the historic bridge were demolished and salvaged because the structure and its important features would be permanently lost. In this instance, MDT and the FHWA would be required to notify the ACHP that the proposed action would have an adverse effect to the historic bridge. MDT would also be required to develop a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) regarding the proposed mitigation for adverse impacts to the historic bridge and seek concurrence from FHWA, SHPO and the ACHP. In addition to advertising the structure for adoption, likely mitigation would also include performing a Level II recordation of the structure to HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD (HAER) standards (if no one agrees to adopt the bridge) and conducting research into this and other bridges in Montana built by the Elkhart Bridge Company.

Impacts of the Preferred Alternative on the Great Northern Railway Main Line. The Preferred Alternative would have no effect to the Great Northern Railway Main Line (24LC1641) in Craig since the project would only upgrade or replace an existing crossing. The proposed work would not alter the track structure or change the overall appearance of the cultural landscape of the railroad line. SHPO concurred with MDT's No Effect determination for 24LC1641 on July 12, 2001. A copy of MDT's letter requesting concurrence with this determination and SHPO's concurrence stamp is provided in **APPENDIX D**.

Impacts of the Preferred Alternative on the Recreation Road. The Preferred Alternative would have no effect to the Recreation Road (former U.S. Highway 91). The proposed project would eliminate the existing county road approach to the Recreation Road and provide a similar approach about 45 m (148 feet) further south. The proposed project would not affect the alignment or other features associated with this historic highway segment considered in MDT's Road and Historic Bridges Preservation Plan.

Cumulative Impacts. The likelihood for encountering cultural materials increases as new lands are disturbed by the proposed bridge project and other ongoing and future developments in the area.

Mitigating Measures. The following measures would be implemented to minimize potential impacts on cultural resources due to implementation of the proposed project:

- *The proposed projects would be coordinated with the Montana SHPO and Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (if necessary) to ensure that appropriate protection is afforded to cultural resources in the project area.*
- *If unanticipated cultural materials were encountered during construction, MDT would require the contractor(s) to temporarily suspend work in the immediate vicinity of the find until the significance of the cultural materials can be assessed.*

Impacts of the No Build Alternative. The No Build Alternative would not cause any further effects on the cultural resources in the Craig area.

9. Impacts to *Section 4(f)* Properties

Section 4(f) of the *U.S. Department of Transportation Act*, as amended (**49 U.S.C. 303**), applies to Federally-funded transportation actions that affect sites on or eligible for the NRHP, publicly-owned parks, recreation lands, and wildlife and waterfowl refuges.

No public parks, or wildlife or waterfowl refuges exist in the project area. However, the Craig Bridge, several historic properties, and a public recreation site at Craig were examined for their applicability to *Section 4(f)*. The potential *Section 4(f)* properties in the project area include:

- Craig Bridge (24LC129);
- Great Northern Railway Main Line (24LC1641);
- Craig Bar (24LC1638), Craig Mercantile (24LC16390, and Great Northern Railway Agent's House (24LC1640) in Craig; and
- Craig Fishing Access Site (FAS).

Of the historic properties in the project area, only the existing Craig Bridge and the Great Northern Railway Main Line are eligible for the NRHP and, therefore, subject to *Section 4(f)*. The MDFWP, the administrator of the Craig FAS, indicated in correspondence dated July 10, 2000 that this public recreation site is significant for *Section 4(f)* purposes. A copy of MDFWP's letter on this matter can be found in **APPENDIX B**.

Impacts of the Preferred Alternative on the Craig Bridge. The potential effects of the proposed bridge project were described earlier under **7. Archaeological and Historical Resources**. As indicated in that section, the Preferred Alternative would adversely affect the Craig Bridge if the historic structure is removed from its present setting or demolished. The Preferred Alternative would have no adverse effect on the historic bridge if the structure is adopted in-place and its historic integrity maintained by the new owners.

According to guidance from the FHWA, *Section 4(f)* does not apply to the construction of a replacement bridge when a historic bridge is left in place and the proximity impacts of the replacement bridge do not substantially impair the historic integrity (i.e., the design, scale, or materials) of the historic bridge. However, MDT elected to prepare a Nationwide *Section 4(f)* Evaluation form for impacts to the old bridge because some uncertainties still exist regarding the structure's adoption in-place.

Impacts of the Preferred Alternative on the Great Northern Railway Main Line. The Preferred Alternative would have no effect to the NRHP-eligible Great Northern Railway Main Line (24LC1641) in Craig. This conclusion was reached because the project would only upgrade or replace an existing crossing. The proposed work would not alter the track structure or change the overall appearance of the cultural landscape of the railroad line through Craig. The Preferred Alternative would have a negligible impact to the Great Northern Historic District, a NRHP-eligible site that encompasses the railroad's entire main line network across Montana.

Impacts of the Preferred Alternative on the Craig FAS. MDFWP's Craig FAS is located immediately southwest of the existing bridge and adjacent to Bridge Street in Craig. MDT's preliminary design plans indicate that the construction limits for the proposed bridge project would generally remain within the existing right-of-way for the county road.

MDT's preliminary road design road design plans show that the right-of-way for the west approach to the proposed bridge would encroach on 0.04 ha (0.10 acres) or less of the FAS property. This encroachment would be due to the need to modify the horizontal and vertical alignments and the placement of road fill on the west approach to the new structure. The Preferred Alternative would require a slight modification to the existing approach to the FAS from the county road. The grade of the approach to the FAS would also have to be adjusted to match the elevation of the new west approach to the proposed bridge. Construction of the west approach to the new bridge may temporary disrupt traffic entering or leaving the FAS.

Floaters putting in at the Craig FAS may experience more difficulty in negotiating their way through the construction zone than other floaters just passing through the area. This difficulty may arise due to the relatively short distance (about 40 m or 130 feet) from the put-in to the likely site for the work bridge. The supporting structure for the work bridge(s) would be designed to provide sufficient freeboard to allow floaters to pass safely beneath the temporary bridge.

Noise associated with construction activities may also cause short-term adverse impacts on those camping at the FAS or other users of the facility.

Nationwide *Section 4(f)* Evaluation Forms. In mid-1983, the FHWA developed "Nationwide" *Section 4(f)* Evaluation forms for projects requiring minor uses of land from NRHP-eligible historic sites and public recreation sites. These forms are *separate* documents from the Environmental Assessment, and are intended to programmatically demonstrate compliance with the provisions of *Section 4(f)*. Copies of completed "Nationwide" Programmatic *Section 4(f)* Evaluation forms for this proposed project's effects on the Craig Bridge, the Great Northern Railway Main Line, and the Craig FAS can be found in **APPENDIX D**.

Impacts of the No Build Alternative. This alternative would not cause any new effects to sites on or eligible for the NRHP, publicly-owned parks, recreation lands, or wildlife and waterfowl refuges.

10. Impacts to Recreational Resources and *Section 6(f)* Lands

The Missouri River is the focus of recreation in the Craig area. As indicated earlier, the reach of the Missouri from the confluence of Little Prickly Pear Creek to Stickney Creek is considered by the MDFWP as "outstanding" for its fisheries resource values. The abundance of large brown and rainbow trout and ready access to the river has resulted in the Missouri River becoming known as one of the world's premier trout streams. Good fishing is possible throughout the year in this reach because nearby Holter Dam controls flows in this section of the river. Both recreational floating and drift fishing are also enjoyed on this section of the Missouri River. A put-in/take-out for boats, parking areas, campsites, water and restroom facilities exist at the Craig FAS.

Section 6(f) of the *NATIONAL LAND & WATER CONSERVATION FUND ACT* (**16 U.S.C. 460**) requires that coordination be done to determine if federal funds were used to acquire or improve any lands in the project area for recreation or water conservation purposes. The MDFWP, the agency that administers the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) in Montana, was contacted about the use of federal monies to acquire or develop recreation facilities in the Craig Bridge area. A letter from the MDFWP dated July 10, 2000 states that no LWCF funds were used at the Craig FAS and *Section 6(f)* does not apply to this recreation site. A copy of MDFWP's letter discussing the lack of *Section 6(f)* involvement is in **APPENDIX B**.

Impacts of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative would have no long-term effects on recreational resources or opportunities at Craig. The proposed bridge would accommodate pedestrian movements beneath the structure along both banks of the river. The low-beam elevation of the proposed bridge would match that of the existing structure to ensure adequate head room for floaters.

Recreational use of the river and riparian lands would continue both upstream and downstream from the project area during construction. However, construction of the new bridge and its approaches would likely cause temporary, adverse effects to recreational activities in the project area. Recreational floating downstream through the work zone could be impeded by the work bridge or bridges needed to build the new structure. Floaters putting in at the Craig FAS may experience more difficulty in negotiating their way through the construction zone than other floaters just passing through the area. This difficulty may arise due to the relatively short distance (about 40 m or 130 feet) from the put-in to the likely site for the work bridge. The supporting structure for the work bridge(s) would be designed to provide sufficient freeboard to allow floaters to pass safely beneath the temporary bridge.

Cofferdams installed in the channel to allow construction of new piers would also present obstacles for river floaters to avoid while passing through the bridge work zone.

Construction of the west approach to the new bridge may temporary disrupt traffic entering or leaving the FAS. Noise associated with construction activities may also cause short-term adverse impacts on those camping at the FAS or other users of the facility.

Cumulative Impacts. Other than the impacts associated with providing a safer and more efficient bridge, the proposed action is unlikely to result in any cumulative effects on recreation in the area.

Mitigating Measures. The following measures would be implemented to minimize potential impacts on recreational resources and opportunities in the Craig area.

- *MDT would coordinate with the MDFWP to determine the need for installing temporary signs at upstream put-in locations for floaters on the Missouri River to provide advance notice of the potential hazards to floating in the work zone at Craig.*
- *MDT would consult with MDFWP to determine if the hours of construction activity for the new bridge should be restricted due to the presence of campsites at the Craig FAS.*

Impacts of the No Build Alternative. There would be no possibility of *Section 6(f)* impacts since LWCF funds were not used to acquire or develop any recreation sites in the project area.

11. Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities

Although counts are not available to quantify such use, pedestrians and bicyclists use the Craig Bridge and adjoining roadways. Pedestrian and bicyclist activity would be expected to be highest during summer weekends and holidays and occur primarily in the vicinity of the Craig FAS and nearby businesses in Craig. Pedestrians and bicyclists using Bridge Street in the Craig townsite, the county road east of the bridge, or the Recreation Road must travel on the existing road's pavement or the unpaved shoulder area. The deck of the Craig Bridge is wide enough to accommodate simultaneous use by a vehicle and a pedestrian or bicyclist. However, no markings exist on the bridge to designate a travel lane for vehicles or an area for foot and bicycle traffic.

Impacts of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative would provide a wider bridge deck and approaches with delineated traffic lanes and shoulders that may be used by bicyclists and/or pedestrians. Shoulders would be 0.6 m (2.0± feet) wide on the new approaches to the bridge and 1.2 m (3.9± feet) wide on the bridge itself. A 1.6 m (5.2± feet) wide sidewalk would also be provided along the upstream (south) side of the proposed bridge. The sidewalk would be ramped down to street level and conform to standards required by the *AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT* (*ADA*). These features would increase safety for pedestrians and bicyclists.

The Preferred Alternative would not provide a separated bike path along any portion of the proposed alignment. The low level of pedestrian and bicyclist activity does not justify the expense of including a separated path on both sides of the proposed bridge with this proposed project.

Discussions during the development of this project suggest considerable interest in reusing the old bridge as a pedestrian/bicyclist facility. Whether or not the old bridge would be converted to a pedestrian/bicyclist facility is currently unknown. MDT has not yet received a detailed proposal from the group proposing to adopt the historic bridge in place outlining its future plans for the structure.

Impacts of the No Build Alternative. There would be no change in the facilities available for use by pedestrians or bicyclists in the project area.

12. Impacts to Visual Resources

The project area is situated in a narrow section of the Missouri River valley and terrain to the east and west of the Craig Bridge is generally flat. The Missouri River is the dominant natural feature of the area and is visible from any location within the project area. Steep hills form the east and west edges of the valley at Craig. Hillsides to the west of Craig are typically vegetated with short grasses and shrubs and large trees are notably absent. The terrain east of the river is steeper and covered with a mix of grasses, shrubs and isolated stands of conifers. Stands of large cottonwoods and willow are common along the banks of the Missouri.

The dominant man-made features in the project area include the existing road and bridge; I-15 and the Recreation Road; streets, parking areas, buildings, fences, and landscaping within the Craig townsite; the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway line; developed recreational facilities at the Craig FAS; overhead utilities, and cultivated agricultural land.

The viewshed (the land area seen from the bridge site) of the project area is dominated by background landscapes (the uplands and mountains surrounding the Craig area) and foreground landscapes (the Missouri River and its riparian corridor, the Craig townsite, and agricultural lands on the east side of the river). Those who view the existing bridge and who would see a new bridge at Craig include permanent and seasonal residents, recreational users of the Missouri River and the Craig FAS, and other motorists passing through the area on I-15 or the Recreation Road.

According to an internet version of the Draft Lewis and Clark County Comprehensive Plan made available for public review (www.helenair.com/compplan/index.html), the Lewis and Clark County Voluntary Agricultural Land Conservation Program has assessed significant open space and recreational resource values within the Wolf Creek and Craig areas. "High Quality Scenic Areas" in the Craig area as identified in the Program include the Wolf Creek Canyon along the Recreation Road and Interstate 15 and along the Missouri River-Holter Lake corridor. The draft Plan indicates that Interstate 15 and the Recreation Road provide travelers with outstanding views of the rural open spaces. The relative lack of billboard advertising, road signs, and large expanses of open ranch lands were listed as contributing elements to the scenic areas near Craig.

Impacts of the Preferred Alternative - The new bridge proposed for the Missouri River at Craig would vary from the existing structure in three main respects: 1) the proposed bridge would be wider than the existing structure and accommodate two-way traffic; 2) the new bridge would be skewed offset slightly to the upstream side of the existing bridge; and 3) the new bridge would have a different design and appearance than the existing structure. The proposed project would also eliminate the existing curves in the alignment of the east approach and provide a wider roadway surface on both approaches to the new bridge. The main structural components likely to be used for the proposed bridge would be concrete rather than steel trusses resulting in considerably different appearance than the present bridge.

As indicated earlier, uncertainties exist about whether the historic bridge would be adopted in place or be adopted and moved to another location. However, it appears likely at this time that the existing historic bridge at Craig would be retained in place. **FIGURES 3-5** and **3-6** in Part III shows the probable appearance of the project area and proposed bridge with and without the existing historic bridge in place.

The visual landscape for those floating beneath the bridge would be dominated by views of the bridges, structural members beneath the bridge decks, and piers associated with the existing and new bridges. The riprap at each end of the new bridge would likely also be seen from the river.

The Preferred Alternative would not alter views of the background landscape in the project area. However, this alternative would change the foreground landscape for users of the county road, residents of Craig, and for those who view the bridge from a distance since two bridges would be visible for the first time. The view from the road on the west approach to the new bridge would be changed due to the removal of several large trees near a residence.
The Preferred Alternative would result in minor, short-term visual impacts during construction including areas of cleared soils until revegetation occurs; the stockpiling of equipment, supplies, and construction materials; and minor dust and debris from construction activities. The potential visual impacts of the project would be mitigated by the construction of uniform and smooth cut and fill slopes shaped to blend with the surrounding terrain. Roadside slopes would be promptly revegetated with desirable plants to control erosion and inhibit invasion by noxious weeds.

Impacts of the No Build Alternative. There would be no change in the visual appearance of the project area.

13. Other Secondary and Cumulative Impacts

Secondary (or indirect) effects are those that are caused by an action and are later in time or farther removed in distance but are still reasonably foreseeable. Secondary impacts are generally induced by the initial action and comprise a wide variety of effects such as, changes in land use, water quality, economic conditions, or population density. The secondary impacts of this proposed project are addressed in appropriate sections of this Part.

Cumulative impacts are those effects that result from the incremental consequences of an action when added to other past and reasonably foreseeable future actions regardless of what agency (federal or non-federal) undertakes such actions.

Projects planned, under construction, or recently completed by MDT and others in the vicinity were reviewed to help assess the cumulative impacts of this project. There are no other known active or planned projects that would occur on I-15, the Recreation Road, or other county roads in the Craig area. For this reason, no other projects would be likely to cause cumulative effects on the project area at Craig nor would the proposed bridge project affect other projects in the general area.

MDT would coordinate its future projects in the Craig area with the public and other appropriate agencies, review the potential impacts to the environment, and identify requirements for mitigation of any adverse effects as projects are developed and implemented.

14. Construction Impacts

As indicated earlier, construction of the new bridge and its approaches would likely occur over one to two construction seasons beginning after bids are opened in early 2003.

Impacts of the Preferred Alternative - There are several impacts associated with the construction of improvements for the Preferred Alternative. These construction-related impacts are described below:

- **Noise and Vibration.** Heavy machinery like earth moving and paving equipment, power tools, and trucks would create periods of undesirable noise in the project area. Noise due to construction activities would produce short-term impacts for residents and visitors to Craig and for users of the Craig FAS. Construction-related noise may also temporarily displace some wildlife and bird species from the area or deter such species from using habitats in the vicinity of the bridge. Pile driving activities associated with the construction of bridge piers and work bridges would generate both noise and vibration impacts that may bother some residents of Craig or users of the Craig FAS.

- **Dust.** The operation of heavy equipment on disturbed areas along the new approaches to the bridge could produce dust.

- **Water Quality.** Runoff from disturbed surface areas has the potential to enter the Missouri River and adversely affect its water quality. Additionally, the construction of concrete piers in the river channel provides an opportunity for sediments or other contaminants to enter surface waters. Petroleum products and other materials could be spilled during the operation and maintenance of equipment needed to build the new bridge and its approaches.

  Some temporary adverse impacts to water quality would occur with the installation and removal of the necessary work bridge(s) or the removal of the old bridge's piers (if the structure is demolished or adopted and used elsewhere).

- **Visual.** Stockpiles of materials and equipment needed for the construction of the new bridge and roadway may cause short-term adverse impacts for local residents and others passing through the project area.

- **Traffic.** Few, if any, disruptions to traffic are anticipated since the existing bridge and road would remain in use during the construction period.

Construction impacts would be mitigated through the implementation and enforcement of control measures during construction. Such measures would include:

- *The contractor would be subject to all state and local laws to minimize construction noise by having mufflers on all equipment.*
- *Dust generated through construction activities and road use would be controlled by the required use of either water or another approved dust suppressant.*
- *Erosion control measures would be employed to prevent sediments from reaching the Missouri River.*
- *Temporary or permanent seeding and mulching would be used to control erosion of disturbed areas.*
- *The contractor would be required to have a plan for implementing appropriate measures in the event of an accidental spill.*
- *Dewatering measures would be implemented to ensure that water removed from pier construction areas are not released without appropriate treatment.*

All work related to the Preferred Alternative for the proposed bridge replacement project would be subject to the provisions included in the current edition of Standard Specifications for Road and Bridge Construction as adopted by MDT and the Montana Transportation Commission.

Impacts of the No Build Alternative - The only construction impacts associated with this alternative would be related to the completion of minor maintenance activities on the existing road and bridge.

15. Permits Required

The No Build Alternative would not require any permits. However, the Preferred Alternative for the proposed bridge project would require the following permits to be obtained prior to any relevant disturbances:

- ***Section 3(a)* Authorization/*124SPA.*** This proposed project would be in compliance with the provisions of both Water Quality for *Section 3(a)* authorizations under **75-5-401 (2) M.C.A.** and Stream Protection under (**87-5-501** through **509 M.C.A.**, inclusive).

  A ***124SPA*** Stream Protection Permit is required by the MDFWP.

  All work would also be in accordance with the *WATER QUALITY ACT OF 1987* (**P.L. 100-4**), as amended.

- ***Section 402/MPDES.*** This proposed project would meet the conditions of the *CLEAN WATER ACT* **(33 U.S.C. 1251 - 1376)** - *Section 402*/Montana Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (ARM 16.20.1314), including temporary erosion control features. Accordingly, MDT would notify the MDEQ of the intent for the proposed project to be covered under the General Permit for storm water discharges associated with construction activity.

- ***Section 404* Permit.** A *CLEAN WATER ACT* **(33 U.S.C. 1251 - 1376)** - *Section 404* permit from the COE would be required for placing fill in wetlands and for the discharge of dredged or fill material associated with bridge and pier construction and bank stabilization at the bridge ends. The COE would determine if proposed project qualifies for a "Nationwide" permit under the provisions of 33 CFR 330.

- **Floodplain Development Permit.** A Floodplain Development Permit would be required from Lewis and Clark County for the proposed work in the delineated floodplain of Missouri River.

- **Land Use License.** The Missouri River in the project area is considered to be "commercially navigable" by the State of Montana. As such, a Land Use License from the DRNC must be obtained for the proposed river crossing.

V. COORDINATION WITH OTHERS

V. COORDINATION with OTHERS

This Part summarizes efforts undertaken by MDT to communicate with the agencies and the public about the proposed bridge project at Craig. The specific objectives of the activities performed to coordinate these projects with the public and agencies with potential interests are to:

- identify and include people, groups, and agencies that may be affected;
- provide opportunities for interested parties to express their views, ideas, and concerns about the project;
- ensure that understandable project information is provided to interested parties; and
- make it apparent to interested parties that their opinions and ideas have been considered during the development of the project.

A. Agency Coordination

1. Cooperating Agencies

Lewis and Clark County is participating as a Cooperating Agency on this proposed project in accordance with the FHWA's regulations (23 CFR 771.111 (d)). Meetings with Lewis and Clark County were held during the development of this environmental document and preliminary design plans for the proposed project.

MDT will extend invitations to representatives of Lewis and Clark County to attend field reviews, public meetings, and other important project meetings. The County will also be afforded opportunities to review and comment on preliminary design plans for the proposed bridge project.

2. Agencies Consulted

The following agencies and parties were consulted during the development of this Environmental Assessment:

- U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Federal Highway Administration (Montana Division Office)
- U.S. Department of the Army, Corps of Engineers
- Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks
- Montana State Historic Preservation Office
- Montana Department of Environmental Quality
- Natural Heritage Program, Montana State Library
- Lewis and Clark County

B. Public Involvement

1. Early Project Notices

A News Release for this project was issued by MDT on September 27, 1999. The news release announced MDT's and Lewis and Clark County's plans to replace the bridge over the Missouri River at Craig. The news release also contained a general description of the purpose of the project, identified the need for right-of-way associated with the new alignment, discussed when the project might be built, and requested comments on the proposed project. The news release was distributed to the *The Cascade Courier*, the *Herald*, five television stations in Great Falls and Helena, and seven radio stations in Great Falls and Helena.

Newspaper articles discussing the proposed project appeared in the *Great Falls Tribune* during December 1999. These articles discussed the proposed bridge replacement and the options of replacing the bridge, building a new bridge but leaving the old structure standing for recreational foot traffic, fixing up the old bridge or doing nothing at all. The articles announced the public meeting to be held on December 9, 1999 and asked for comments about replacing the bridge at Craig.

Newspaper articles discussing this proposed project also appeared in the *Independent Record* on May 20, 2000 and May 27, 2000. These articles identified MDT's proposed project to construct a new bridge across the Missouri River at Craig and discussed the options of either leaving the existing bridge in place or demolishing the structure. The article on May 20, 2001 also informed the public of an informational meeting that was to be held on May 25, 2000 to discuss plans for replacing the Missouri River bridge.

No comments were received by MDT following the 1999 news release or the 2000 newspaper article. Copies of the news release and articles can be found in **APPENDIX E**.

2. Early Project Meetings

December 9, 1999 Public Meeting

Lewis and Clark County held a public information meeting on December 9, 1999 at the Craig School. The meeting began at 7:00 p.m. and lasted until about 9:00 p.m. and was attended by some 30 people. The information meeting was held to inform the public of the proposed scope of work for Craig Bridge. County staff used the meeting as an opportunity to solicit to comments on issues or concerns that should be considered in the development of the design and the environmental documents for the project.

Public Comments Heard at the December 9, 1999 Meeting. Public comments heard at the December 9, 1999 informational meeting and written comments received after the meeting were reviewed by the Lewis and Clark County to identify important issues or concerns about the proposal to build a new bridge at Craig. The County received more than twenty written comment forms (distributed at the December public information meeting). Comments received as a result of the meeting are discussed below.

- Those commenting suggested that the most appropriate location for a new bridge would be downstream from the existing structure to avoid impacts on the Craig FAS. Several comments also indicated support for having a structure capable of two-way traffic.

- Most offering comments supported the idea that a new bridge should be constructed at Craig. Approximately the same number of comments were received supporting the idea of building a new bridge and removing the old structure as were received in support of building a new bridge and retaining the old bridge.

- A notable number of comments were received calling for the preservation and adaptive reuse of the historic bridge. Additional information about how the bridge could be adopted was also requested from a few people attending the meeting.

- Most comments indicated that closing the bridge at Craig during construction would be unacceptable due to the adverse effects such an action would have on local businesses.

A summary of the December 9, 1999 meeting and comments received can be found in **APPENDIX E.**

May 25, 2000 Public Meeting

MDT and Lewis and Clark County held this information meeting as a follow up to the meeting held on December 9, 1999. The meeting began at 7:00 p.m. in the Craig School gymnasium and lasted until about 9:00 p.m. In addition to staff from MDT or Lewis and Clark County, the meeting was attended by about 35 persons.

After the December 9, 1999 meeting, the County and MDT had the opportunity to analyze and discuss issues and comments brought forth by the public. The May 2000 meeting provided an opportunity to address some of the issues raised regarding the bridge project and to make the public aware of MDT's progress in the development of the project. MDT representatives discussed the preliminary design process for the bridge, the Adopt-A-Bridge program and the environmental compliance process. The meeting also allowed the Lewis and Clark County Commissioners and other County staff to hear comments on the future disposition of the old bridge. Newspaper articles and other pertinent information about the May 2000 meeting can be found in **APPENDIX E.**

Comments Heard at the May 25, 2000 Meeting. The public was given an opportunity to ask questions or make comments about the project. Many of the questions heard focused on issues relating to the retention of the old bridge, the bridge adoption process, and project funding. A summary of major comments heard and responses to questions asked about the project are provided below.

- **Will taxes go up as a result of constructing a new bridge?** The response given to this question was no. It was pointed out that the funds for the project are 80% federal with a

20 % state match. The cost of rehabilitating the bridge would not be an eligible expense under the BR program and would have to be paid for by the County.

- **Is the old bridge still eligible for funding if a new bridge is built?** MDT indicated about $60,000 (the estimated cost of bridge demolition) would be available to whomever adopted the old bridge. If the county retained ownership, only county funds or possibly Community Transportation Enhancement Program (CTEP) funds would be available for the structure. If a private group (foundation) were formed to adopt the bridge, CTEP funds would be the only federal/state money potentially available to such a group.

- **Does the County have the option of being a member of a foundation formed to adopt the bridge?** County staff stated that the County does not really want to have to raise tax dollars to maintain the old bridge. The County would be essentially responsible for two bridges at Craig and have full liability for both structures.

- **Can demolition money be used to purchase liability insurance policy and how much does liability insurance cost?** MDT and County staff did not have specific answers to these questions. It is assumed that the adopting party could use the money to purchase liability insurance. The adopting party would still be responsible for the costs of maintaining the structure. If the County maintained ownership, its liability insurance policy would continue to cover the old structure.

- **Where is money for Preconstruction Activities associated with the project coming from?** MDT staff explained that the funds would come from the Bridge Rehabilitation program.

- **Would an environmental document have to be done for future demolition of the old bridge?** MDT staff explained that it would depend on the ownership situation and if there was any federal or state money involved. If a private entity or the county owned the bridge and no federal or state money were involved, an environmental document would not be needed. The demolition would be subject to permitting requirements through the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks, Corps or Engineers, and possibly county floodplain regulations. The EA for this project would discuss the potential effects of bridge demolition if a decision were made to move or demolish the old structure.

- **What about the sidewalk proposed for the new bridge?** MDT staff explained its intention to accommodate use by pedestrians and bicyclists on the bridge and its approaches.

- **What about the enforcement of speeding through Craig and railroad crossing?** County staff stated the need for increased enforcement has been discussed with the County Sheriff. It was also pointed out that warrants are used to determine need for warning lights and arms at the railroad crossing.

- **What is the Sufficiency Rating?** MDT explained the factors considered in the development of MDT's Sufficiency Ratings for bridges.

- **Why not incorporate the old truss into a new structure or consider using a more "aesthetically pleasing" design for the new bridge?** MDT's Area Bridge Engineer stated that the reuse of the existing truss imposes significant design limitations for the new bridge and perpetuates some undesirable geometric conditions. It is possible to do a more elaborate design but the costs need to be weighed against total off-system bridge needs in Montana. The construction of a new Craig bridge as proposed would already consume about half of the State's total annual allocation of off-system bridge funds.

- **What does the County want to see from a group if one is formed to adopt the old bridge?** A member of the County Commission indicated he wanted to see a fairly definitive plan for how such a group would adopt and maintain the bridge. Such a group needs to show they are organized and financially able to take on the responsibility for the old bridge.

3. Planned Public Involvement Activities

A Notice of Availability of the Environmental Assessment and planned date for a Public Hearing on the Missouri River - Craig project will be mailed to all parties on the mailing list and advertised in local newspapers. The notice will be published in area newspapers to inform the general public of the hearing. The date of the Public Hearing will be advertised at least fifteen days in advance of the meeting.

At the public hearing, the general public will be given the opportunity to provide official comments on the proposed action. Written comments will be received on the document for thirty (30) days following the hearing. After the close of the official comment period, comments received on the document will be reviewed and the text of the Environmental Assessment will be modified as required.

If no significant impacts are identified, MDT will submit the revised Environmental Assessment and *Section 4(f)* Evaluation to FHWA and request that the agency make a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). The FONSI will then be attached to the Environmental Assessment. If significant impacts are found, then MDT and FHWA must determine if an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) must be prepared to advance the proposed actions.

C. Distribution List for Document

The following agencies, groups, and individuals are being sent a copy of this Environmental Assessment/*Section 4(f)* Evaluation:

AGENCIES AND OTHERS WITH INTERESTS IN PROJECT

MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
Permitting and Compliance Division
P.O. Box 200901
Helena, Montana 59620-0901
Attn: Jeff Ryan

MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS
Fisheries Division
P.O. Box 200701
Helena, MT 59620-0701
Attn: Glenn Phillips

MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS
4600 Giant Springs Road
Great Falls, MT 59405
Attn: Mike Aderhold, Region Four Supervisor

MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS
4600 Giant Springs Road
Great Falls, MT 59405
Attn: David D. Todd, Region Four Parks Manager

MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS
Parks Division
P.O. Box 200701
Helena, MT 59620-0701
Attn: Tom Reilly

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCE & CONSERVATION
Central Land Office
8001 North Montana
Helena, MT 59601

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COUNCIL
Office of the Director
Capitol Post Office Box 215
Helena, MT 59620

STATE LIBRARY
Collection Management Librarian
1515 East Sixth Avenue
Helena, MT 59620-1800

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS
Helena Regulatory Office
301 South Park Avenue, Drawer 10014
Helena, MT 59626-0014
Attn: Todd Tillinger

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
301 South Park, Box 10023
Helena, MT 59626
Attn: Scott Jackson

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
Federal Highway Administration
2880 Skyway Drive
Helena, MT 59602

LEWIS AND CLARK COUNTY COMMISSION
Court House
316 North Park Avenue
Helena, MT 59623

Eric Griffin, Director
Lewis and Clark County
Public Works Department
3402 Cooney Drive
Helena, MT 59602

Director
Lewis and Clark County Planning Department
P.O. Box 1725
Helena, MT 59624

Kathy Macefield
City-County Historic Preservation Officer
City of Helena Planning Division
316 North Park Avenue
Helena, MT 59623

J.J. Shive
403 West Quartz Street
Butte, MT 59701-9156

Sterling Ranch Company
2929 Craig Frontage Road
Wolf Creek, MT 59648

D. List of Agencies With Jurisdiction and/or Permits Required

The following agencies have permit requirements applicable to this proposed bridge project:

Department of Natural Resources and Conservation - Easement for new right-of-way across the Missouri River bed and Land Use License.

U.S. Department of the Army, Corps of Engineers (Regulatory Office) -- *Section 404* Permit for placing fill material associated with road construction in wetlands or "Waters of the U.S."

Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks - *124SPA* Permit as required under the *MONTANA STREAM PROTECTION ACT*.

Montana Department of Environmental Quality, Permitting and Compliance Division - Notice of intent to be covered by General Permit for storm water and pollution prevention plan in accordance with *Section 402*/Montana Pollutant Discharge Elimination System.

Lewis and Clark County - Floodplain Development Permit for the proposed work in the delineated floodplain of the Missouri River.

E. List of Other Agencies, Persons, or Groups Contacted or Have Contributed Information

The agencies and individuals below were contacted for information useful to the preparation of this Environmental Assessment. Pertinent correspondence from some of these individuals has been included in **APPENDIX B**.

- Lex Riggle, District Conservationist, Natural Resources and Conservation Service
- Eric Griffin, Director, Lewis and Clark County Public Works Department
- Ken Soderberg, MDFWP
- David D. Todd, MDFWP, Region 4 Parks Manager

Missouri River - Craig
BR 9025(15)
Environmental Assessment

APPENDICES

Appendix A: List of Preparers

The following parties are responsible for the preparation and content of this document:

Joel M. Marshik, P.E.
Environmental Services Manager
Montana Department of Transportation
P.O. Box 201001
Helena, MT 59620-1001

Janice W. Brown, Division Administrator
Montana Division Office
Federal Highway Administration
2880 Skyway Drive
Helena, MT 59602

The following consultants assisted the Montana Department of Transportation coordinate, develop supporting information, and write this document:

Robert Peccia & Associates, Inc.
Consulting Civil Engineers, Planners and Designers
825 Custer Avenue
P.O. Box 5653
Helena, Montana 59604

Land & Water Consulting, Inc. (formerly Western EcoTech, LLC)
Biological Resource Consultants
801 North Last Chance Gulch
P.O. Box 239
Helena, MT 59624

Renewable Technologies, Inc.
Cultural Resource Consultants
511 Metals Bank
Butte, MT 59701

Appendix B: Correspondence Pertinent to Project

USDA

ed States
epartment of
griculture

Natural
Resources
onservation
ervice

790 Colleen St.
elena, MT 59601
06-449-5000 Ext. 3
06-449-5039 Fax

[illegible]
MAY 12 2000
ROBERT PECCIA

May 11, 2000

Daniel Norderud, AICP
Peccia & Associates
825 Custer Avenue
Helena, MT 59604

Dear Mr. Norderud,

Please find the attached Soil Mapping Unit Legend and map containing soil delineation's for the MDT Missouri River – Craig [BR 9025(15)] project. Only mapping unit 112A is identified as significant and has been characterized as **lands of statewwide importance**.

Let me know if you have additional questions.

Sincerely,

Lex Riggle
Lex Riggle
NRCS District Conservationist

The Natural Resources Conservation Service works hand-in-hand with the American people to conserve natural resources on private lands.

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

U.S. Department of Agriculture

FARMLAND CONVERSION IMPACT RATING

PART I *(To be completed by Federal Agency)*

Date of Land Evaluation Request **October 31, 2000**

Name of Project
[illegible]SSOURI RIVER - CRAIG
Project BR 9025 (15); Control No. 2795

Federal Agency Involved
U.S. DOT Federal Highway Administration/MDT

Proposed Land Use
New Bridge Construction, Reconstruct Bridge Approaches, and New R/W

County and State
Lewis and Clark County, Montana

PART II *(To be completed by SCS)*

Date Request Received by SCS Nov 2, 2000

Does the site contain prime, unique, statewide or local important farmland?
(If no, the FPPA does not apply - do not complete additional parts of this form).
Yes ☒ No ☐

Acres Irrigated 0

Average Farm Size 1,638

Major Crop(s) hay and small grains

Farmable Land in Govt. Jurisdiction
Acres: 822,068

Amount of Farmland As Defined in FPPA
Acres: %

Name of Land Evaluation System Used Land Evaluation & Site Assessment

Name of Local Site Assessment System LEWIS & CLARK Co. LESA Report

Date Land Evaluation Returned by SCS 3-8-01

		Alternative Site Rating			
PART III *(To be completed by Federal Agency)* Land Evaluation Information		Proposed Action	Site B	Site C	No-Action
A. Total Acres To Be Converted Directly (New Right-of-Way thru Farmland)		1.83	N/A	N/A	0.0
B. Total Acres To Be Converted Indirectly		0.00	N/A	N/A	0.0
C. Total Acres in Site (Estimated Total Right-of-Way Area)		3.60	N/A	N/A	2.20
PART IV *(To be completed by SCS)* Land Evaluation Information					
A. Total Acres Of Prime And Unique Farmland		20,365			
B. Total Acres Of Statewide or Local Important Farmland		150,161			
C. Percentage Of Farmland in County or Local Govt. Unit To Be Converted		0.0002			
D. Percentage Of Farmland in Govt. Jurisdiction With Same Or Higher Relative Value		7.2			
PART V *(To be completed by SCS)* Land Evaluation Criterion Relative Value Of Farmland To Be Converted *(Scale of 0 to 100 Points)*		75 ~~100~~			
PART VI *(To be completed by Federal Agency)* Site Assessment Criteria *(These criteria are explained in 7 CFR 658.5(b)*	Maximum Points				
1. Area in Nonurban Use	15	8			
2. Perimeter in Nonurban Use	10	3			
3. Percent of Site Being Farmed	20	10			
4. Protection Provided by State and Local Government	20	0			
5. Distance From Urban Builtup Area	N/A	–			
6. Distance to Urban Support Services	N/A	–			
7. Size of Present Farm Unit Compared to Average	10	10			
8. Creation of Nonfarmable Farmland	25	0			
9. Availability of Farm Support Services	5	2			
10. On-Farm Investments	20	10			
11. Effects of Conversion on Farm Support Services	25	0			
12. Compatibility With Existing Agricultural Use	10	0			
TOTAL SITE ASSESSMENT POINTS	160	43			
PART VII *(To be completed by Federal Agency)*					
Relative Value Of Farmland *(From Part V)*	100	75			
Total Site Assessment *(From Part VI above or a local Site assessment)*	160	43			
TOTAL POINTS *(Total of above 2 lines)*	260	118			

[illegible] Selected:

Date of Selection 6-4-01

Was a Local Site Assessment Used? Yes ☒ No ☐

Reason For

(See Instructions on reverse side)

Form AD-1006 (10-8

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

1420 E. Sixth Ave.
P.O. Box 200701
Helena, MT 59620-0701
December 13, 1999

DEC 15 1999

Eric Griffin
Public Works Department
3402 Cooney Drive
Helena, MT 59602

RE: Proposed Bridge Replacement at Craig, Montana

Dear Eric:

Listed below are some general comments, ideas, and suggestions for the proposed bridge replacement across the Missouri River at the town of Craig.

1. I suggest investigating further with MDT the criteria and requirements for a group (whether privately organized or government related) to "adopt" a bridge structure such as the existing Craig bridge. For example: Who is eligible? How must they be organized? What are the insurance/bonding requirements? Is a property deed transferred? How would a transfer of responsibilities take place? And so on. I'm assuming that MDT has this type of information in written form for their bridges. Without putting this question to rest, it is likely to continue to be put forth as a viable option.

   You may want to ask specifically about the MDT bridge project east of Wolf Point at the Highway 13 crossing of the Missouri River. This bridge was adopted by a local group of some type. I am not certain of the arrangement reached with MDT, but there should be someone within the MDT Bridge Bureau that has the background information on the transfer. This project was completed approximately two years ago.

2. A very similar bridge structure was constructed this year across the Yellowstone River approximately six miles east of Big Timber in Sweetgrass County as is currently proposed at Craig. The old bridge at this site is/was an open truss structure as is Craig's. MDT placed the new concrete bridge immediately upstream from the old bridge. The contractor built his work bridge between the old and new bridges. I was down at the site in June as a bridge beam had fallen off the work bridge, and I stopped to look at it.

   The point here is that the existing bridge remained open to traffic while the new bridge was constructed. This can be done as long as the new bridge is not constructed on the same right-of-way alignment. There will be a period of time when the switchover must take place, but this can be coordinated to be a few weeks rather than a few months.

3. Development of a realistic schedule should prove helpful for your next public meeting. Besides the design and environmental review phase, the points that will be the most informational to the citizens of Craig will be the construction phase of the new bridge on-site. Please see the schedule diagram on the comment sheet for some ideas.

4. I propose that the new bridge be constructed on the north side of and paralell to the existing Craig bridge. The MDT bridge designers are the experts at this, but some things to look for in your design review include adequate space between the old and new bridges for the placement of the contractors work bridge and a plan to demo/remove the existing bridge in conjunction with placement of the new bridge. It may be possible to demo and remove the east and west-end sections of the existing bridge from the approach at each respective end. That way, only the center section(s) would have to be removed via the contractors work bridge.

   Additionally, placement of the new bridge to the north will not interfere with the Fish, Wildlife & Parks boat ramp area at the Craig FAS immediately upstream of the existing bridge. This is an important factor to consider as the Craig FAS is one of the main access points for fishing and recreational floaters of all types on the upper section of the Missouri River below Holter Dam. Displacement of the boat ramp would likely lead to the shifting of recreational use to other public sites immediately upstream and downstream of the site. This shifting of recreational use is sure to have a negative impact on the business' in Craig.

5. It will be helpful to get some photographs before, during, and after construction of the Grey Bear Bridge project from MDT. Have them enlarged so you can present them at the next public meeting in Craig. It always helps to have some actual photographs of a similar project to get participants focused and to visualize what they can realistically expect. In light of the bridge beam accident on the MDT project at the Grey Bear site, there should be plenty of photos available.

6. FWP would be very interested in discussing options for the existing County right-of-way at the western bridge approach. Increasing recreational use has lead to parking problems and site congestion at the Craig FAS. Any additional land base available on the north side of the existing FWP boundary would be beneficial in addressing the congestion issues at the site.

Thanks in advance for the opportunity to comment on the proposed bridge replacement at the Craig crossing of the Missouri River. If there are any questions or comments, please contact me at 444-3752.

Sincerely,

Tom R. 12/13/9

Tom Reilly
Assistant Administrator
Parks Division

Attachment

✓

Montana Department
of
Fish, Wildlife & Parks

DEC 13 1999

4600 Giant Springs Road
Great Falls, MT 59405

December 10, 1999

Eric Griffin, Director
Lewis & Clark County
Public Works Department
3402 Cooney Drive
Helena, MT 59602

Dear Eric Griffin, Director:

Subject: Craig Bridge

I felt that last night's meeting was run very professionally and liked the way it softened local concerns.

I would like to give you some comments following last night's public meeting:

1. The new bridge location would be more simple and probably less costly if done downstream from the current location.
2. If built upstream the current boat launch, boat ramp and camping area that FWP manages will be negatively impacted and would necessitate mitigation; such mitigation would be costly.
3. It would be best to choose a construction strategy that would leave the existing bridge functioning in place while the new bridge is being constructed to limit the time where no bridge crossing is possible.
4. I understand why engineers and designers would prefer straight approaches to the bridge, but because of the private, local interests a few corners in the town approach from the west side of the bridge could minimize local impacts. I can relate to the Ulm bridge west side approach.
5. I would like to be involved at future review points to keep the FWP access interests in mind.
6. We will cooperate with the County and the State as you go through this process, thanks for the opportunity.

Feel free to call me or Ray Swartz (R4 Parks Maintenance Supervisor) for any additional consultation.

Sincerely,

David D. Todd

David D. Todd
Region Four Parks Manager

✓

CITY OF HELENA PLANNING DIVISION
316 North Park Avenue
Helena, Montana 59623

447-8000, ext. 490
Date: December 8, 1999
File: 150O CraigBridge

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Board of County Commissioners

FROM: Kathy Macefield, City-County Historic Preservation Officer

SUBJECT: **Comments on the Craig Bridge**

The Helena/Lewis and Clark Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) regrets they cannot attend the public meeting in Craig on December 9, 1999 to discuss options for the Craig bridge.

The HPC recognizes the historic and aesthetic values of the of the Craig bridge. At their monthly meeting on December 8, 1999, the HPC unanimously (7:0 vote) stated their support for the adaptive reuse of the Craig bridge by retaining the bridge in its current location and current design for pedestrian/bicycle and fishing access. The Fort Benton bridge provides a successful example of the adaptive reuse of a historic structure that has provided a significant contribution to tourism and their economy. The town of Craig could also receive a similar benefit with the adaptive reuse of the Craig bridge.

Appendix C: Structure Inventory and Appraisal Report

INITIAL ASSESSMENT FORM FOR STRUCTURE :

L25013000+03001

CRAIG

General Location Data

District Code, Number, Location : 03 Dist 3 GREAT FALLS
Division Code, Location : 31 GREAT FALLS
County Code, Location : 049 LEWIS & CLARK
City Code, Location : 00000 RURAL AREA
Kind of Hwy Code, Description : 44 County Hwy
Route Number : 25013
Owner by Code, Description : 2County Highway Agency
Maintained by Code, Location : 2County Highway Agency
Intersecting Feature : MISSOURI RIVER 062
Coincident Structure Number :
Structure on the State System : ☐
Structure on the NHS : ☐
Kilometer Post : .482804
Structure Latitude : 47^04'42"
Longitude : 111^57'36"

Structure Rating & Posting Data

Loading Data :

Design Loading Code, Desc :	0	0 Other or Unknown
Inventory Load, Type, Desc :	7.22	2 AS Allowable Stress
Operating Load, Type, Desc :	10.82	2 AS Allowable Stress
Posting Code, Desc :	0	0 >39.9% below

Rating Data :

	Operating	Inventory	Posting
Truck Type 1 :	15 1	10 9	6
Truck Type 2 :	23 1	15 12	
Truck Type 3 :	30 622	19 14	

Yes

MJM 4-25-90

Structure Deck, Roadway & Span Data

Structure Length : 146.30 M
Deck Area : 660 M SQ
Deck Roadway Width : 4.51 M
Approach Roadway Width : 6.71 M
Number of Main Spans : 3
Number of Approach Spans : 2

Traffic Data

Total ADT : 100
Truck Percent : -1 %
ADT Count Year : 1995

Structure Construction Data

Construction Project Number :
Construction Station : +
Construction Drawing Number : none
Construction Year : 1903
Reconstruction Year : 2000

Structure Vertical & Horizontal Clearance Data

Vertical Clearance Over : 4.42 M
Vertical Clearance Under : 0.00 M
Horizontal Clearance Under Right : 0.00 M
Horizontal Clearance Under Left : 0.00 M

NBI Inspection Data

Inspection Due Date : 01 May 1997

(91) Inspection Fequency (months) : 24
(90) Date of Last Inspection : 01 May 1995
(90) Inspection Date : 05 DECEMBER 1996
Sufficiency Rating : 0 29.6
Structure Status :

(67) Structure Rating :	3	
(58) Deck Rating :	6	5
(59) Superstructure Rating :	5	5
(60) Substructure Rating :	6	6
(68) Deck Geometry :	6	
(72) App Rdwy Align :	6	6
(41) Posting Status :	P	
(36A) Bridge Rail Rating :	0	0
(36B) Transition Rating :	0	0
(36C) Approach Rail Rating :	1	0
(36D) End Rail Rating :	0	0
(62) Culvert Rating :	N	N
(61) Channel Rating :	8	
(113) Scour Critical :	4	
(71) Waterway Adequacy :	8	8

Crew Hours for inspection : -1 3/4
(112)Structure of NBI Length : ☒
Snooper Required : ☒ Not
Snooper Hours for inspection : -1 0
Unrepaired Spalls : -1 M SQ
Deck Surfacing Depth : IN 5½"

2"x6" ON EDGE TREATED

Underwater - Category II not I

I&C

S.I.& A. SUPPLEMENTAL FORM

STRUCTURE NO. L25013 000to.300 FEATURE CROSSED Missouri River

INSPECTED BY Bill Lay / C. Pepos DATE INSPECTED 12-5-96

CONDITION RATINGS

58. 7 DECK

A. N CURBS
B. 7 FLOORING/SLAB
C. N GUARD ANGLES
D. N JOINTS
E. N MEDIAN
F. 6 RAIL/BARRIER
G. N SIDEWALKS
H. 7 WEARING SURFACE
I. N OTHER

59. 5 SUPERSTRUCTURE

A. 4 BEARING DEVICES
B. 4 BRACING
C. N DRAINAGE
D. 6 FLOORBEAMS
E. N GIRDERS
F. 5 PAINT
G. 6 STRINGERS
H. 6 TRUSSES
I. N UTILITIES
J. 5 OTHER

60. 6 SUBSTRUCTURE

A. 6 ABUTMENTS
B. 6 BENTS/PIERS
C. N BRACING
D. 7 CAPS
E. 6 COLUMNS
F. 6 ENDFILLS
G. N FOOTINGS/SILLS
H. 7 ICE BREAKERS
I. N PILES/POSTS
J. 5 RETAINING WALLS
K. 5 OTHER

61. 8 CHANNEL AND CHANNEL PROTECTION

A. N CHANNEL LINING
B. 7 DRIFT
C. N LEVEES
D. N RIP RAP/GABIONS
E. N SCOUR/PIPING
F. N SPUR DIKE
G. 8 STREAM BANK
H. 8 VEGETATION
I. N OTHER

62. N CULVERT

A. ___ DEPOSITION
B. ___ EMBANKMENT
C. ___ FOOTINGS
D. ___ RAIL/BARRIER
E. ___ INVERT
F. ___ JOINTS/BOLTS
G. ___ RETAINING WALLS
H. ___ SHAPE
I. ___ OTHER

65. 8 APPROACH ROADWAY CONDITION

A. N APPROACH SLAB
B. 8 EMBANKMENT
C. 7 GUARDRAIL
D. N JOINTS
E. 8 SHOULDERS
F. 8 SURFACE
G. 8 TRANSITION
H. N OTHER

APPRAISAL RATINGS

71. 8 WATERWAY ADEQUACY

A. 8 ALIGNMENT
B. 8 CAPACITY
C. 8 FREEBOARD
D. 8 PROFILE
E. N OTHER

72. 6 APPROACH ROADWAY ALIGNMENT

A. 6 HORIZONTAL CURVE
B. 6 LATERAL CLEARANCE
C. 7 LOAD POSTED
D. 7 SIGNS/MARKERS
E. 7 VERTICAL CURVE
F. 7 VISIBILITY
G. N OTHER

REMARKS: Railing is weathered & loose
Steel decking is loose
Deep ~~st~~ checks in some stringers in end spans
Some rollers exposed - shows movement & twist in truss sections
Some rust throughout
Concrete deterioration @ Both Abutments and @ Nose of piers behind the ice breakers
Some drift in eastern span
Some Caisons are split open
Erosion @ corners of east (south) abutment

Category II Underwater

PRIORITY	MAINTENANCE ACTIVITY NUMBERS	MAINTENANCE RECOMMENDATIONS FEDERAL-AID - STATE MAINTAINED ONLY	MAINTENANCE FORCES REPAIRS COMPLETED BY:	DATE

Appendix D: "Nationwide" Programmatic Section 4(f) Evaluations and Supporting Materials

MONTANA DIVISION

"NATIONWIDE" PROGRAMMATIC *SECTION 4(f)* EVALUATION FOR HISTORIC BRIDGES

Project #: BR 9025(15); (P.M.S. C#2795)
Project Name: Missouri River - Craig

Date: August 8, 2001
Description: Craig Bridge (24LC129)
Location: Lewis and Clark County, Montana

The Craig Bridge is a three-span pin-connected Pratt through truss. The bridge has a Queen post pony truss on its west approach and a timber stringer approach to the east. The Elkhart Bridge Company of Elkhart, Indiana built the existing bridge in 1903. The historic bridge has a total length of 146.0 m (479.0± feet) and consists of two 11.5 m (37.7± feet) long end spans and three 41.0 m (134.5± feet) long intermediate through-truss spans. The bridge has a 4.5 m (14.8± feet) wide timber deck and a vertical (overhead) clearance of 4.4 m (14.5± feet). The bridge was initially recorded and determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) in 1979.

MDT and Lewis and Clark County advertised the existing bridge for adoption during March 2001. As a result of this effort, a group proposing to adopt the historic structure in-place was identified. The group is presently assembling a formal proposal to adopt the bridge. If efforts to adopt the structure in-place are successful and the new owners care for the bridge in a manner that maintain its historic integrity, there would be no adverse effect to 24LC129. If the existing structure were not adopted, the proposed bridge replacement would result in a use of the historic bridge. If this occurs, then the old bridge would likely be demolished or dismantled for use at another location.

Parts I and II of the attached Environmental Assessment (EA) include maps, descriptions and photographs of 24LC129.

NOTE: *Any response in a box will require additional information, and may result in an individual evaluation/statement. Consult the "Nationwide" Section 4(f) Evaluation procedures.*

	YES	NO
1. Is the bridge a NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK?	☐	X
2. Have agreements been reached through the procedures pursuant to *Section 106* of the *National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA)* with the following:		
STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE (SHPO)?	X	☐
ADVISORY COUNCIL ON HISTORIC PRESERVATION (ACHP)?	X	☐

MDT's historic roads and bridges Programmatic Agreement with the FHWA, the SHPO, and ACHP was enacted in lieu of regular procedures for compliance with *Section 106* of the *NATIONAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION ACT* as applied only to historic roads and bridges in Montana.

	YES	NO
3. Any other agency/ies with jurisdiction at this location?	X	
a) If "YES" will additional approval(s) for this *Section 4(f)* application be required?	☐	X
b) List of agencies with jurisdiction at this location:		
USA - Corps of Engineers (*Section 404* Permit **required**)	X	
USDA - Forest Service	☐	X
USDA - Natural Resources Conservation Service (*FPPA*)	☐	X
FEMA Regulatory Floodway (**County Floodplain Development Permit**)	☒	
MDFW&P - Parks Division (**Craig Fishing Access Site**)	☒	
MDFW&P - Wildlife Division (wetlands)	☐	X
MDFW&P - Fisheries Division - ***124SPA* permit required**	☒	
MDNR&C (navigable rivers under state law)	☒	
MDNR&C (irrigation systems)	☐	X
MDEQ - Air Quality Division		X
MDEQ - Permitting and Compliance - **MPDES Compliance**	X	
Other: **LEWIS AND CLARK COUNTY COMMISSION**	X	

NOTE: *Any response in a box will require additional information, and may result in an individual evaluation/statement. Consult the "Nationwide" Section 4(f) Evaluation procedures.*

ALTERNATIVES & FINDINGS

EACH of the following **ALTERNATIVES** for this proposed project have been evaluated to avoid the use of the historic bridge:

1. "Do Nothing."
2. Rehabilitate the existing bridge without affecting the historic integrity of the structure in accordance with the provisions of *Section 106* in the *NHPA*.
3. Construct the proposed bridge at a location where the integrity of the existing historic structure will not be affected as determined by the provisions of the *NHPA*.

The above **ALTERNATIVES** have been applied in accordance with this PROGRAMMATIC *SECTION 4(f)* EVALUATION and are supported by **EACH** of the following **FINDINGS:**

	YES	**NO**
1. The "Do Nothing" **ALTERNATIVE** has been evaluated and has been found to ignore the basic transportation need at this location.	X	☐
This **ALTERNATIVE** is neither feasible nor prudent for the following reasons:		
a) Maintenance — this **ALTERNATIVE** does not correct the structurally deficient condition and/or poor geometrics (clearances, approaches, visibility restrictions) found at the existing bridge. Any of these factors can lead to a sudden catastrophic collapse, and/or a potential injury including loss of life. Normal maintenance will not change this situation.	X	☐
b) Safety — this **ALTERNATIVE** also does not correct the situation which causes the existing bridge to be considered deficient. Because of these deficiencies, the existing bridge presents a serious and unacceptable safety hazard to the traveling public and/or places intolerable restrictions (gross vehicle weight, height, and/or width) on transport. **The existing bridge has a 4.5 m (14.8± foot) wide timber deck and a vertical clearance of 4.4 m (14.5 feet). The single-lane bridge also has a 6-ton load limit. The County restricts the use of the bridge to one vehicle at a time due to sight distance limitations on each approach.**	X	☐
A copy of the MDT Bridge Bureau's Inspection Report for the bridge is attached. **See APPENDIX C.**	X	☐

2. The rehabilitation **ALTERNATIVE** has been evaluated with one or more of the following **FINDINGS**:

	YES	**NO**
a) The existing bridge's structural deficiency is such that it cannot be rehabilitated to meet minimum acceptable load and traffic requirements without adversely affecting the structure's historic integrity.	X	
b) The existing bridge's geometrics (height, width) cannot be changed without adversely affecting the structure's historic integrity.	X	
c) This **ALTERNATIVE** does not correct the serious restrictions on visibility(approach geometrics, structural requirements) which also contributes to an unsafe condition at this location.	X	
Is this rehabilitation **ALTERNATIVE** therefore considered to be feasible and/ or prudent based on the preceding evaluations?	☐	X

ALTERNATIVES & FINDINGS (continued)

NOTE: *Any response in a box will require additional information, and may result in an individual evaluation/statement. Consult the "Nationwide" Section 4(f) Evaluation procedures.*

	YES	NO
3. The relocation **ALTERNATIVE**, in which the new bridge has been moved to a site that presents no adverse effect upon the existing structure has also been considered under the following **FINDINGS**:		
a) Terrain and/or local geology. The present structure is located at the only feasible and/or prudent site for the bridge on the existing route. Relocating to a new site — either up-, or downstream of the preferred location — will result in extraordinary bridge/approach engineering and associated construction costs.	___	X
The preferred site is the only prudent location due to the terrain and/or geologic conditions in the general vicinity.	___	X
Any other location would cause extraordinary disruption to existing traffic patterns.	___	X
b) Significant social, economic and/or environmental impacts. Locating the proposed bridge in other than the preferred site would result in significant social/economic impacts such as the displacement of families, businesses, or severing of prime/unique farmlands.	X	___
Shifting the proposed bridge substantially up-or downstream would require more right-of-way from adjacent landowners and would sever existing irrigated fields. Impacts to other Section 4(f) properties could also result.		
Significant environmental impacts such as the extraordinary involvement in wetlands, regulated floodplains, or habitat of threatened/endangered species are likely to occur in any location outside the preferred site.	___	X
c) Engineering and economics. Where difficulty/ies associated with a new location are less extreme than those listed above, the site may still not be feasible and prudent where costs and/or engineering difficulties reach extraordinary magnitudes. Does the **ALTERNATE** location result in significantly increased engineering or construction costs (such as a longer span, longer approaches, etc.)?	X	___
d) Preservation of existing historic bridge may not be possible due to either or both of the following:		
the existing structure has deteriorated beyond all reasonable possibility of rehabilitation for a transportation or alternative use;	___	X
no responsible party can be located to maintain and preserve the historic structure.	___	X
The Craig Bridge has been made available for any "responsible party/ies" under MDT's Adopt-a-Bridge program. MDT and Lewis and Clark County advertised the existing bridge for adoption during March 2001. As a result of this effort, a group proposing to adopt the historic structure in-place was identified. The group is presently assembling a formal proposal to adopt the bridge. If efforts to adopt the structure in-place are successful and the new owners care for the bridge in a manner that maintain its historic integrity, there would be no adverse effect to 24LC129.		
Therefore, in accordance with the previously-listed FINDINGS it is neither feasible nor prudent to locate the proposed bridge at a site other than the preferred **ALTERNATE** as described.	___	[X]

MDT has identified a viable alignment for the new bridge immediately downstream from 24LC129.

MEASURES TO MINIMIZE HARM

NOTE: *Any response in a box will require additional information, and may result in an individual evaluation/statement. Consult the "Nationwide" Section 4(f) Evaluation procedures.*

This "Nationwide" Programmatic *Section 4(f)* Statement applies only when the following **Measures to Minimize Harm** have been assured; a check in a box MAY void the Programmatic application — if so, a full *Section 4(f)* Evaluation **will be required**:

	YES	NO
1. Is the bridge being rehabilitated under this proposed project?	____	X

Rehabilitating this bridge was eliminated from further consideration since this alternative would not provide a facility capable of accommodating two-way travel or eliminate geometric deficiencies at the crossing. Lewis and Clark County has requested that this bridge be replaced rather than rehabilitated. The County believes that continued maintenance costs in the future and the high traffic demand at Craig warrants a new bridge.

If "YES", is the historic integrity of the structures being preserved to the greatest extent possible; consistent with unavoidable transportation needs, safety, and load requirements? Not applicable

NOTE:
If "NO", refer to item 2., following, to determine Programmatic applicability.

	YES	NO
2. The bridge is being replaced, or rehabilitated to the point where historic integrity is affected. Are adequate records being made of the existing structures under HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD standards, or other suitable means developed through consultation with SHPO and the ACHP?	___	☒

It appears likely at this time, an adopting party would adopt the historic bridge in-place.

	YES	NO
3. If the bridge is being replaced, is the existing structure being made available for alternative use with a responsible party to maintain and preserve same?	X	☐

See item 3.d) under "ALTERNATIVES & FINDINGS" previous. Two parties have proposed to adopt the Craig Bridge. One party proposes to adopt the bridge in place and the other would remove the bridge for use at another location. MDT is pursuing efforts to retain the structure in-place.

4. If the bridge is being adversely affected, has agreement been reached through the *Section 106* process of the *National Historic Preservation Act* on these **Measures to Minimize Harm** (which will be incorporated into the proposed project) with the following: Not applicable

If efforts to adopt the structure in-place are successful and the new owners care for the bridge in a manner that maintain its historic integrity, there would be no adverse effect to 24LC129.

COORDINATION

There has been additional **COORDINATION** with the following agencies regarding this proposed project (other than those listed previously):

City/County government:	**Lewis and Clark County requested this proposed project in early 1999**
Local historical society:	**Kathy Macefield, City-County Historic Preservation Officer December 1999**
Adjacent property owners:	**MDFWP and Sterling Ranch Company - December 1999**
Others:	**Public Information Meetings December 1999 and May 2000**

This proposed project is also documented as an **Environmental Assessment** under the requirements of the *National Environmental Policy Act* (**42 U.S.C. 4321**, *et seq.*).

SUMMARY

The No Build Alternative does not satisfy the specified purpose and need for improvements at the Missouri River crossing at Craig. The present bridge is nearly a century old and has a Sufficiency Rating of 29.6 (see Part II in the EA). MDT considers this bridge to be structurally deficient and functionally obsolete based on detailed evaluations of the structure's condition. The No Build Alternative does not meet the traveling public's needs because it does not address deficient structural conditions and the limited vertical clearance associated with the existing bridge, fails meet MDT's optimal width for two-lane roadways, and would not improve an alignment which restricts driver visibility at the river crossing.

Rehabilitating the Craig Bridge would not provide a structure capable of accommodating two-way travel or eliminate geometric deficiencies (one-way travel, height restrictions, sight distance problems) at the crossing. Rehabilitation is also not an action endorsed by the Lewis and Clark County, the owners of the bridge. The existing bridge cannot be rehabilitated without adversely affecting its historic integrity.

Constructing a bridge on the existing alignment would have an adverse effect on the historic Craig Bridge and would cause adverse economic effects on the community of Craig due to the need to close the river crossing during construction of the new bridge. Building a new bridge immediately upstream of the existing bridge would also impact the Great Northern Railway Main Line and would severely impair the functions and use of the Craig FAS, another Section 4(f) property. Constructing a new crossing well up or downstream from the current bridge would cause extraordinary environmental impacts and/or substantially increase engineering and construction costs and would also likely require crossings of the Great Northern Railway Main Line. MDT concluded that building a new bridge slightly downstream from the present structure was the only viable alternative for the Missouri River crossing at Craig. The reasons for making these conclusions are provided in Part III of the EA.

Although the setting of the existing historic structure would be slightly altered by the presence of a new bridge immediately downstream, MDT concluded there would be no adverse effect to the NRHP-eligible Craig Bridge. A new bridge can be provided on this downstream alignment without causing extraordinary environmental impacts or substantially increasing engineering and construction costs. A suitable party has expressed interest in adopting the old bridge in-place. Assuming the interested party adopts the historic bridge, the proposed action would avoid the "use" (i.e.: removal) of this historic bridge. If the existing structure were not adopted, the proposed action would result in a use of the historic bridge. In this instance, the old bridge would likely be demolished or dismantled for use at another location.

The proposed action meets all criteria regarding the required **ALTERNATIVES, FINDINGS**, and **MEASURES TO MINIMIZE HARM** which will be incorporated into this proposed project. All possible planning to minimize harm to 24MA1696 has been undertaken. This proposed project therefore complies with the July 5, 1983 Programmatic *Section 4(f)* Evaluation by the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration.

APPROVAL

This document is submitted pursuant to **49 U.S.C. 303** and in accordance with the provisions of **16 U.S.C. 470f**.

Date: 8-22-01

Terry L. Yarger, P.E.
Engineering Bureau Chief
MDT Environmental Services

Approved: Date: 8/27/01
Federal Highway Administration

JOSEF
MDT

serving you with pride

Montana Department of Transportation
2701 Prospect Avenue
PO Box 201001
Helena MT 59620-1001

David A. Galt, Director
Judy Martz, Governor

2001041103

CONCUR
MONTANA SHPO
DATE 1 May 2001 SIGNED

RECEIVED
BY:

April 6, 2001

Dr. Mark Baumler
State Historic Preservation Office
1410 8th Avenue
P.O. Box 201202
Helena, MT 59620-1202

Subject: BR 9025(15)
[Missouri River – Craig Bridge Replacement]
Control No. 2795

Enclosed is the Determination of Effect for the above MDT bridge replacement project in Lewis & Clark County. We have determined that the proposed project would have **No Adverse Effect** on the NRHP-eligible Missouri River Bridge at Craig (24LC129). The segment of railroad located within the project area is covered under the terms of the existing railroad programmatic agreement and will be dealt with accordingly. We request your concurrence.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 444-6258.

Jon Axline

Jon Axline, Historian
Environmental Services

Enclosure

cc: Mick Johnson, Great Falls District Administrator
Joe Kolman, P.E., Bridge Engineer
Gordon Stockstad, Resources Bureau

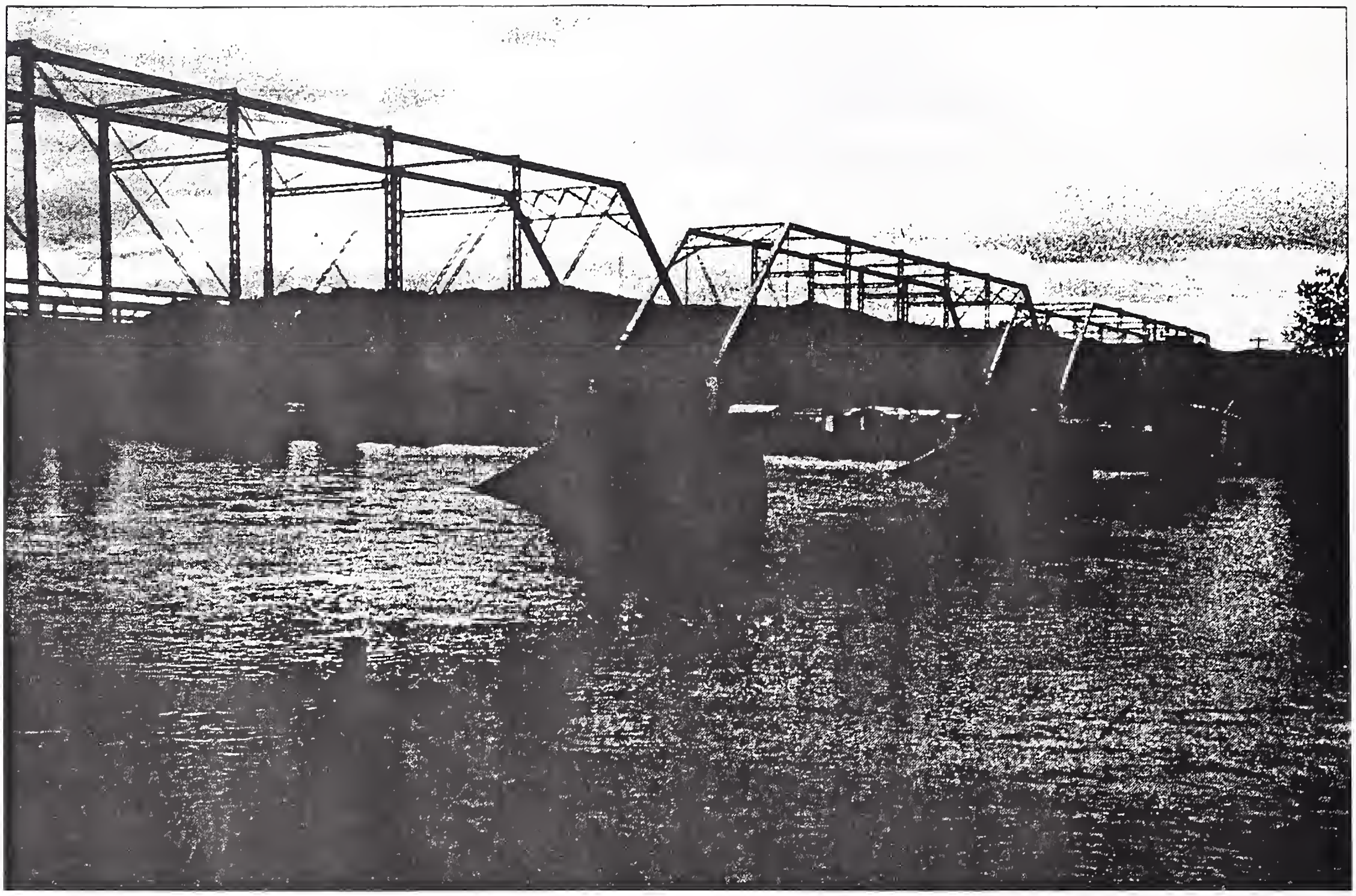
Environmental Services Unit
Phone: (406) 444-7228
Fax: (406) 444-7245

An Equal Opportunity Employer

Web Page: www.mdt.state.mt.us
Road Report: (800) 226-7623
TTY: (800) 335-7592

City Desk: 447-4071
rich.myers@helenair.com

Craig bridge



IR photo by **Dave Shors**

A FLY FISHERMAN CASTS HIS LINE into the Missouri River as a raft floats by.

Bridge up for adoption

Department of Transportation looking for an individual or group to maintain historic structure

By CAROLYNN FARLEY
IR Staff Writer

Time is running out for the Missouri River Bridge, which has spanned the waterway at Craig for almost 100 years.

The deadline for applications from individuals or groups willing to adopt the historic structure — Jan. 26 — is fast approaching.

Joe Kolman, the Montana Department of Transportation bridge engineer in charge of the adoption project, had fielded three inquiries as of Thursday, but received no completed applications.

"We want to make sure somebody goes through enough effort that they can foresee the costs and really understand the responsibilities," he said, regarding the application process.

Last year, Lewis and Clark County secured almost $3 million in federal Bridge Replacement Program money to fund the construction of a new bridge.

The existing Missouri River Bridge is a three-span, pin-connected truss bridge that was constructed in 1903. It's a single-lane bridge with a load limit of 8 tons.

The new bridge is scheduled to be constructed in the summer of 2002 just downstream of the existing bridge and will use four main spans to reach 500 feet across the river. It will be two lanes with a walking path and have a load limit of close to 40 tons.

Although they acknowledge the historic significance of the structure to the area, county commissioners have indicated they aren't willing to accept the liability associated with maintaining the bridge in the future.

"We'd hate to put a financial burden on the county 50 years from now to tear it down," said Ron Alles, county administrative officer.

Kolman estimates the cost of demolishing the bridge at about $60,000 — too rich for the county's blood, Alles said.

MDOT is prepared to spend that amount of money to have the bridge demolished in the next couple of years, but not to keep in reserve to destroy the bridge later, Kolman said. The adoptive group would be responsible for bearing the cost of demolishing the bridge in the future should it become necessary.

Another option is that MDOT could hand over the demolition money — $20,000 per span — now, to help pay for the relocation and maintenance of some or all of the bridge.

The bridge also could be adopted and maintained in place.

"The department's preference is if (interested parties) could take the whole (bridge). It maintains the integrity of the bridge," Kolman said. "But if you can save some (of the structure), it's better than nothing."

Kolman said MDOT has successfully adopted out several bridges over the years including the 10th Avenue Bridge in Great Falls and the Yellowstone Bridge at Pompeii's Pillar.

Anyone interested in adopting the bridge at Craig should call Kolman at 444-6260.

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U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration

PROGRAMMATIC SECTION 4(F) EVALUATION AND APPROVAL FOR FHWA PROJECTS THAT NECESSITATE THE USE OF HISTORIC BRIDGES

This statement sets forth the basis for a programmatic Section 4(f) approval that there are no feasible and prudent alternatives to the use of certain historic bridge structures to be replaced or rehabilitated with Federal funds and that the projects include all possible planning to minimize harm resulting from such use. This approval is made Pursuant to Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966, 49 U.S.C. 303, and Section 18(a) of the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1968 23 U.S C. 138.

USE

The historic bridges covered by this programmatic Section 4(f) evaluation are unique because they are historic, yet also part of either a Federal-aid highway system or a State or local highway system that has continued to evolve over the years. Even though these structures are on or eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places, they must perform as an integral part of a modern transportation system. When they do not or cannot, they must be rehabilitated or replaced in order to assure public safety while maintaining system continuity and integrity. For the purpose of this programmatic Section 4(f) evaluation, a proposed action will "use" a bridge that is on or eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places when the action will impair the historic integrity of the bridge either by rehabilitation or demolition. Rehabilitation that does not impair the historic integrity of the bridge as determined by procedures implementing the national Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended (FHWA), is not subject to Section 4(f).

APPLICABILITY

This programmatic Section 4(f) evaluation may be applied by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to projects which meet the following criteria:

1. The bridge is to be replaced or rehabilitated with Federal funds.
2. The project will require the use of a historic bridge structure which is on or is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.
3. The bridge is not a National Historic Landmark.
4. The FHWA Division Administrator determines that the facts of the project match those set forth in the sections of this document labeled Alternatives, Findings, and Mitigation.
5. Agreement among the FHWA, the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) has been reached through procedures pursuant to Section 106 of the NHPA.

ALTERNATIVES

The following alternatives avoid any use of the historic bridge:

1. Do nothing.
2. Build a new structure at a different location without affecting the historic integrity of the old bridge, as determined by procedures implementing the NHPA.

3. Rehabilitate the historic bridge without affecting the historic integrity of the structure, as determined by procedures implementing the NHPA .

This list is intended to be all-inclusive. The programmatic Section 4(f) evaluation does not apply if a reasonable alternative is identified that is not discussed in this document. The project record must clearly demonstrate that each of the above alternatives was fully evaluated and it must further demonstrate that all applicability criteria listed above were met before the FHWA Division Administrator concluded that the programmatic Section 4(f) evaluation applied to the project.

FINDINGS

In order for this programmatic Section 4(f) evaluation to be applied to a project, each of the following findings must be supported by the circumstances, studies, and consultations on the project:

1. Do Nothing . The do nothing alternative has been studied. The do nothing alternative ignores the basic transportation need. For the following reasons this alternative is not feasible and prudent:

    a. Maintenance - The do nothing alternative does not correct the situation that causes the bridge to be considered structurally deficient or deteriorated. These deficiencies can lead to sudden collapse and potential injury or loss of life. Normal maintenance is not considered adequate to cope with the situation.

    b. Safety - The do nothing alternative does not correct the situation that causes the bridge to be considered deficient. Because of these deficiencies the bridge poses serious and unacceptable safety hazards to the traveling public or places intolerable restriction on transport and travel.

2. Build on New Location Without Using the Old Bridge. Investigations have been conducted to construct a bridge on a new location or parallel to the old bridge (allowing for a one-way couplet), but, for one or more of the following reasons, this alternative is not feasible and prudent:

    a. Terrain - The present bridge structure has already been located at the only feasible and prudent site, i.e., a gap in the land form, the narrowest point of the river canyon, etc. To build a new bridge at another site will result in extraordinary bridge and approach engineering and construction difficulty or costs or extraordinary disruption to established traffic patterns.

    b. Adverse Social, Economic, or Environmental Effects - Building a new bridge away from the present site would result in social, economic, or environmental impact of extraordinary magnitude. Such impacts as extensive severing of productive farmlands, displacement of a significant number of families or businesses, serious disruption of established travel patterns, and access and damage to wetlands may individually or cumulatively weigh heavily against relocation to a new site.

c. Engineering and Economy - Where difficulty associated with the new location is less extreme than those encountered above, a new site would not be feasible and prudent where cost and engineering difficulties reach extraordinary magnitude. Factors supporting this conclusion include significantly increased roadway and structure costs, serious foundation problems, or extreme difficulty in reaching the new site with construction equipment. Additional design and safety factors to be considered include an ability to achieve minimum design standards or to meet requirements of various permitting agencies such as those involved with navigation, pollution, and the environment.

d. Preservation of Old Bridge - It is not feasible and prudent to preserve the existing bridge, even if a new bridge were to be built at a new location. This could occur when the historic bridge is beyond rehabilitation for a transportation or an alternative use, when no responsible party can be located to maintain and preserve the bridge, or when a permitting authority, such as the Coast Guard requires removal or demolition of the old bridge.

3. Rehabilitation Without Affecting the Historic Integrity of the Bridge. Studies have been conducted of Studies have been conducted of rehabilitation measures, but, rehabilitation measures, but, for one or more of the for one or more of the following reasons, following reasons, this alternative is not feasible and this alternative is not feasible and prudent:

   a. The bridge is so structurally deficient that it cannot be rehabilitated to meet minimum acceptable load requirements without affecting the historic integrity of the bridge.
   b. The bridge is seriously deficient geometrically and cannot be widened to meet the minimum required capacity of the highway system on which it is located without affecting the historic integrity of the bridge. Flexibility in the application of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials geometric standards should be exercised as permitted in 23 CFR Part 625 during the analysis of this alternative.

MEASURES TO MINIMIZE HARM

This programmatic Section 4(f) evaluation and approval may be used only for projects where the FHWA Division Administrator, in accordance with this evaluation, ensures that the proposed action includes all possible planning to minimize harm. This has occurred when:

1. For bridges that are to be rehabilitated, the historic integrity of the bridge is preserved, to the greatest extent possible, consistent with unavoidable transportation needs, safety, and load requirements;

2. For bridges that are to be rehabilitated to the point that the historic integrity is affected or that are to be moved or demolished, the FHWA ensures that, in accordance with the Historic American Engineering Record (HAER) standards, or other suitable means developed through consultation, fully adequate records are made of the bridge;

3. For bridges that are to be replaced, the existing bridge is made available for an alternative use, provided a responsible party agrees to maintain and preserve the bridge; and

4. For bridges that are adversely affected, agreement among the SHPO, ACHP, and FHWA is reached through the Section 106 process of the NHPA on measures to minimize harm and those measures are incorporated into the project. This programmatic Section 4(f) evaluation does not apply to projects where such an agreement cannot be reached.

PROCEDURES

This programmatic Section 4(f) evaluation applies only when the FHWA Division Administrator:

1. Determines that the project meets the applicability criteria set forth above;
2. Determines that all of the alternatives set forth in the Findings section have been fully evaluated;
3. Determines that use of the findings in this document that there are no feasible and prudent alternatives to the use of the historic bridge is clearly applicable;
4. Determines that the project complies with the Measures to Minimize Harm section of this document;
5. Assures that implementation of the measures to minimize harm is completed; and
6. Documents the project file that the programmatic Section 4(f) evaluation applies to the project on when it is to be used.

COORDINATION

Pursuant to Section 4(f), this statement has been coordinated with the Departments of the Interior, Agriculture, and Housing and Urban Development.

Issued on: July 5, 1983

Approved: /Original Signed By/
Ali Sevin, Director
Office of Environmental Policy
Federal Highway Administration

MONTANA DIVISION

"NATIONWIDE" *SECTION 4(f)* EVALUATION
FOR MINOR USAGE OF
PUBLIC PARKS, RECREATION LANDS, AND WILDLIFE AND WATERFOWL REFUGES

Project # BR 9025 (15), (P.M.S. C# 2795) Date: August 8, 2001

Project Name: Missouri River - Craig Location: Craig Fishing Access Site (FAS)
Lewis and Clark County, Montana

The Craig FAS sits on a 1.02 ha (2.53 acre) parcel of State of Montana land located immediately south of the county road (Bridge Street) and adjacent Missouri River. The Craig FAS provides public access to the river and offers a location for extended camping. This proposed project would require the reconstruction of the county road adjacent to the FAS that serves as the west approach to the river crossing. MDT's preliminary design plans show that the right-of-way for the west approach to the proposed bridge would encroach on 0.04 ha (0.10 acres) or less of the FAS property. The Preferred Alternative would revise the existing approach to the FAS by modifying its connection to the county road. A map showing the location of the FAS, a site photo and an exhibit showing the impacted area of the fishing access site are attached.

NOTE: *Any response in a box requires additional information. Consult the "Nationwide" Section 4(f) Evaluation criteria.*

	YES	NO
1. Is the *4(f)* site adjacent to the existing highway?	X	☐
2. Does the amount and location of the proposed impact area impair the use of the remaining *Section 4(f)* land for its intended purpose?	☐	X
3. Does the proposed project require more than a minor amount* of the *Section 4(f)* site for Right-of-Way? **This proposed project would affect about 4% of the total area of the Craig FAS.**	☐	X
4. Are there any proximity impacts which would impair the use of the *4(f)* lands for their intended purpose (defined as "constructive use")? **Some minor, temporary adverse effects could occur during construction.**	☐	X
5. Have the officials with jurisdiction over the property agreed in writing with the assessment of impacts and the proposed mitigation? **MDFWP will receive a copy of the EA and their concurrence will be requested.**	___	☒
6. Have Federal funds — such as the *National Land & Water Conservation Fund - Section 6(f)* — been used for the acquisition of, or improvements to the *4(f)* site? ***Section 6(f)* funds were not used to acquire/develop the FAS.**	☐	X
If yes — has the land conversion/transfer been coordinated with the appropriate Federal agency,	**Not Applicable**	
and are they in agreement	**Not Applicable**	
7. Is the proposed action under an Environmental Impact Statement (E.I.S.)?	☐	X
8. Is the proposed project on a new location? **Minor alignment changes to the county road (west approach to the bridge) would occur adjacent to the FAS.**	☐	X
9. The Scope-of-Work for the proposed project is one of the following: a) Improved traffic operation; b) Safety improvements; c) 3R; d) **Bridge replacement on essentially the same alignment**; or e) Addition of lanes.	X	☐

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*NOTE: MDT's guidelines for "minor amounts" of Right-of-Way (including Construction Permits) are limited to either 10% of a parcel under 10 hectares (25 acres), or 1% of a parcel equal to or greater than 10 hectares (25 acres) in size.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

NOTE: Any response in a box requires additional information. Consult the "NATIONWIDE" SECTION 4(F) EVALUATION criteria.

	YES	NO
1. The "do-nothing" **ALTERNATIVE** has been evaluated, and is not considered to be feasible and prudent. **This alternative would not improve the existing bridge that MDT considers to be structurally deficient and functionally obsolete.**	X	☐
2. An **ALTERNATIVE** has been evaluated which improves the highway without any *4(f)* impacts, and is also not considered to be feasible and prudent. **Rehabilitating the Craig Bridge was eliminated from consideration since the rehabilitated structure would not meet provide a facility capable of accommodating two-way travel or eliminate geometric deficiencies at the crossing. Lewis and Clark County has requested that this bridge be replaced rather than rehabilitated. The County believes that continued maintenance costs in the future and the high traffic demand at Craig warrants a new bridge.** **Reconstructing the bridge on the existing alignment was examined by MDT but eliminated from consideration because this alternative would require that the existing historic bridge, a NRHP-eligible site, be removed.**	X	☐
3. An **ALTERNATIVE** on a new location avoiding the *4(f)* site has been evaluated, and is not considered to be feasible and prudent. **The location of this project was established by the continuous use of the existing river crossing since the early 1900s. This crossing location is important to the residents and businesses in Craig. Building a river crossing far enough up or downstream to avoid the FAS would still impact the Great Northern Railway Main Line, another Section 4(f) property in Craig.**	X	☐
Descriptions of **ALTERNATIVES 2**. and **3**. are attached. **See Part III of the attached Environmental Assessment.**	X	☐

MINIMIZATION OF HARM

	YES	NO
1. The proposed project includes all possible planning to minimize harm.	X	☐
2. Measures to minimize harm include the following:		
a) Replacement of the lands used with lands of reasonably equivalent usefulness and location, and of at least comparable value.		X
b) Replacement of facilities impacted including sidewalks, paths, benches, lights, trees, and other facilities. **MDT would reconstruct the county road approach to the FAS and would replace any perimeter fencing and signing for the fishing access site impacted by the proposed project.**	X	
c) Restoration/landscaping of disturbed areas. **MDT would promptly revegetate disturbed areas in or adjacent to the FAS.**	X	
d) Special design features.		X
e) Payment of, or improvements to the remaining *4(f)* lands equal in cost to fair market value.		X
f) Other measures.		X

COORDINATION

	YES	NO
1. The proposed project has been coordinated with the Federal, state, and/or local officials having jurisdiction over the *4(f)* lands. **Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks correspondence dated 7-10-2000**	X	☐

COORDINATION (continued)

	YES	NO
2) In the case of non-federal *4(f)* lands, the official with jurisdiction has been asked to identify any Federal encumbrances — and none exist. **MDFWP letter dated 7-10-2000**	X	☐
3) Coordination with the U.S. Army - Corps of Engineers has been completed, or a *Section 404* Permit (if applicable) is pending. **A *Section* 404 permit would be applied for when final design plans for the new bridge and its approaches are completed.**	X	☐

SUMMARY

The proposed action is preferred because the No Build Alternative does not satisfy the specified purpose and need for improvements at the river crossing. The present bridge is nearly a century old and has a Sufficiency Rating of 29.6 (see Part II in the EA). MDT considers this bridge to be structurally deficient and functionally obsolete based on detailed evaluations of the structure's condition. The No Build Alternative does not meet the traveling public's needs because it does not address deficient structural conditions and the limited vertical clearance associated with the existing bridge, fails to meet MDT's optimal width for two-lane roadways, and would not improve an alignment which restricts driver visibility at the river crossing.

Rehabilitating the Craig Bridge would not provide a facility capable of accommodating two-way travel or eliminate geometric deficiencies (one-way travel, height restrictions, sight distance problems) at the crossing. Rehabilitation is also not an action endorsed by the Lewis and Clark County, the owners of the bridge.

Building a new bridge slightly downstream from the present structure was the only viable alternative identified by MDT for the Missouri River crossing at Craig. Constructing a bridge on the existing alignment would require the closure of the existing bridge causing adverse economic effects on the community of Craig and this alternative would require the removal of the historic bridge. Building a new bridge immediately upstream of the existing bridge would result in substantial adverse effects to the Craig FAS and could severely impair the functions and use of this recreation site. Constructing a new crossing well up or downstream from the current bridge would cause extraordinary environmental impacts and/or substantially increase engineering and construction costs. The reasons for making these conclusions are provided in Part III of the EA. Therefore, no feasible and prudent alternatives exist to avoid the minor "use" of land from the Craig FAS.

Part III of the attached Environmental Assessment describes the alternatives considered by MDT and the analysis used to identify a preferred alternative for this proposed bridge project.

The proposed action meets all criteria regarding the required **Alternatives**, **Coordination**, and **Measures to Minimize Harm**. All possible planning to minimize harm to the Craig FAS has been undertaken and will be incorporated in this proposed project. This proposed project therefore complies with the December 23, 1986 Final Nationwide *Section 4(f)* Evaluation by the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration.

APPROVAL

This document is submitted pursuant to **49 U.S.C. 303** and in accordance with the provisions of **16 U.S.C. 470f.**

Date: 8-22-01

Terry L. Yarger, P.E.
Engineering Bureau Chief
MDT Environmental Services

Approved: Federal Highway Administration Date: 8/27/01

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

1420 East Sixth Avenue
PO Box 200701
Helena, MT 59620-0701
July 10, 2000

MASTER FILE COPY

Mr. Joel Marshik, Manager
Environmental Services
Dept. of Transportation
P.O. Box 201001
Helena, MT 59620-1001

RECEIVED
JUL 13 2000
ENVIRONMENTAL

RE: Missouri River Bridge in Craig, MT

Dear Mr. Marshik:

We have reviewed your above-mentioned proposed project area and would like to bring to your attention the existence of a fishing access site (Craig FAS) next to the bridge you are planning to replace. Attached for your information is a map of the Craig Fishing Access Site and its proximity to the project area.

This site would fall under section 4(f), however, no Land and Water Conservation Funds were used at this site therefore section 6(f) does not apply. If any part of the site will be affected by this project, you should coordinate mitigation with Mr. Mike Aderhold the regional Supervisor in the FWP Region 4 Office. Mr. Mike Aderhold can be contacted at (406) 454-5840 or at FWP Region 4, 4600 Giant Springs Road Great Falls, MT. 59406.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

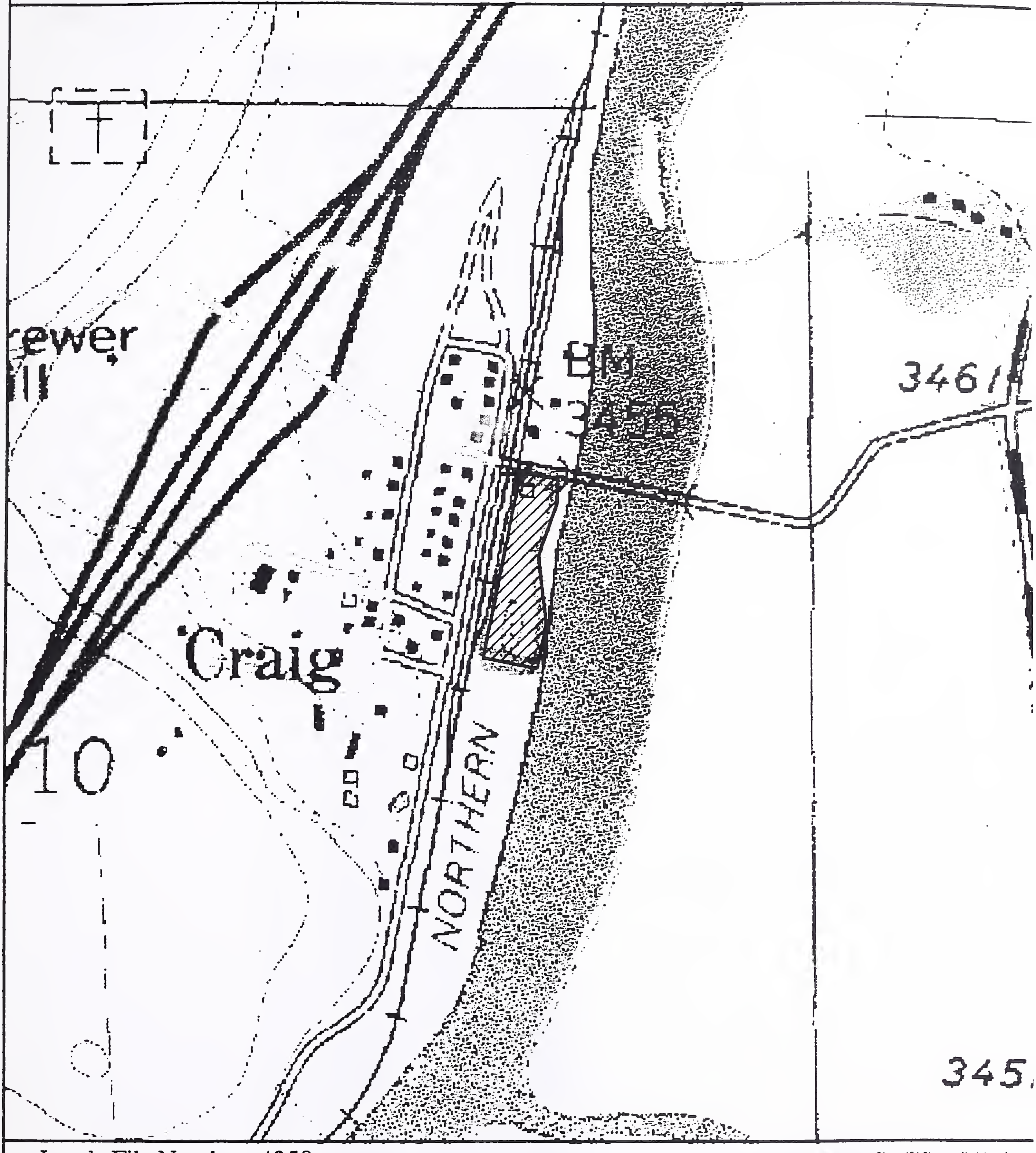
Sincerely,

Ken Soderberg
LWCF Program Officer
Parks Division

Attachment

C: Mike Aderhold- FWP Region 4

Missouri Rec Rd/Craig FAS



Lands File Number: 4350

T15N/R3W

2.534 acres	0 acres
▨	▨
Fee Simple FAS Parcel	Leased FAS Parcel

0 500 1000

Scale in feet

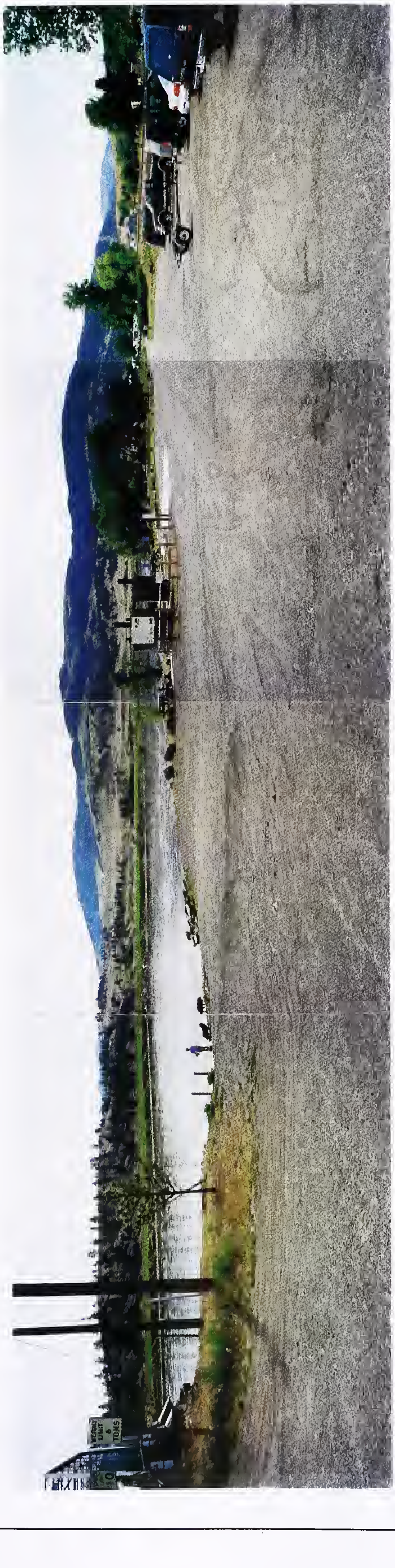
Scale 1:6000

Fishing Access Sites (FAS) are digitized and maintained by the Information Services Unit of the Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks. FAS's were digitized at 1:24,000 using the COGO module of Arc/Info. The background image is a USGS 7.5 minute quadrange digital raster graphic.

Information Services

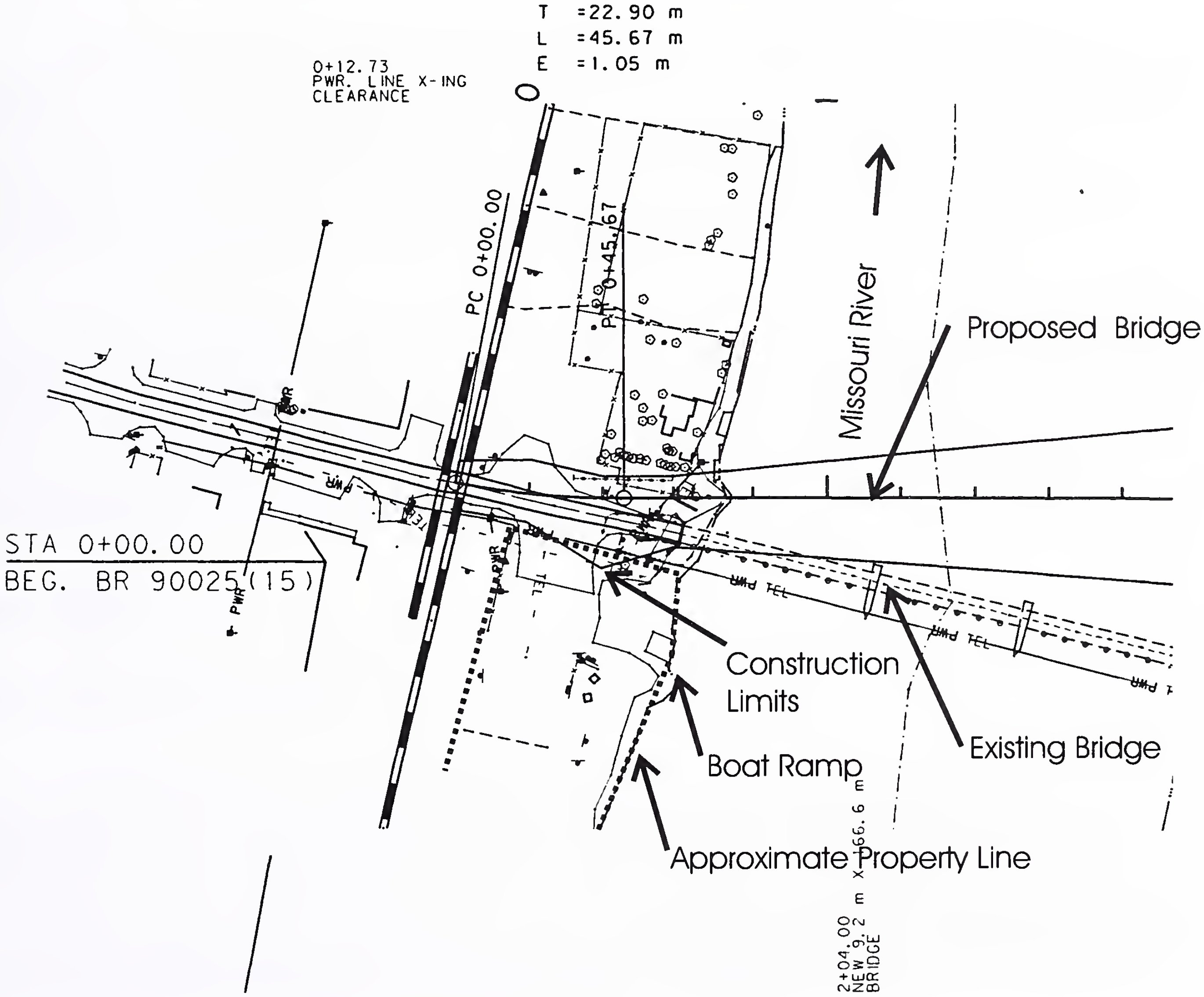
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

Map produced by NRIS, request# 00FWP6 - September 22, 1999



Missouri River - Craig

Photograph
Craig Fishing Access Site



Missouri River - Craig

Impacts to the Craig Fishing Access Site

U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration

FINAL NATIONWIDE SECTION 4(F) EVALUATION AND APPROVAL FOR FEDERALLY-AIDED HIGHWAY PROJECTS WITH MINOR INVOLVEMENTS WITH PUBLIC PARKS, RECREATION LANDS, AND WILDLIFE AND WATERFOWL REFUGES

This programmatic Section 4(f) evaluation has been prepared for projects which improve existing highways and use minor amounts of publicly owned public parks, recreation lands, or wildlife and waterfowl refuges that are adjacent to existing highways. This programmatic Section 4 (f) evaluation satisfies the requirements of Section 4(f) for all projects that meet the applicability criteria listed below. No individual Section 4(f) evaluations need be prepared for such projects. (Note: a similar programmatic Section 4(f) evaluation has been prepared for projects which use minor amounts of land from historic sites).

The FHWA Division Administrator is responsible for reviewing each individual project to determine that it meets the criteria and procedures of this programmatic Section 4(f) evaluation. The Division Administrator's determinations will be thorough and will clearly document the items that have been reviewed. The written analysis and determinations will be combined in a single document and placed in the project record and will be made available to the public upon request. This programmatic evaluation will not change the existing procedures for project compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) or with public involvement requirements.

Applicability

This programmatic Section 4(f) evaluation may be applied by FHWA only to projects meeting the following criteria:

1. The proposed project is designed to improve the operational characteristics, safety, and/or physical condition of existing highway facilities on essentially the same alignment. This includes "4R" work (resurfacing, restoration, rehabilitation, and reconstruction), safety improvements, such as shoulder widening and the correction of substandard curves and intersections; traffic operation improvements, such as signalization, channelization, and turning or climbing lanes; bicycle and pedestrian facilities; bridge replacements on essentially the same alignment; and the construction of additional lanes. This programmatic Section 4(f) evaluation does not apply to the construction of a highway on a new location.

2. The Section 4(f) lands are publicly owned public parks, recreation lands, or wildlife and waterfowl refuges located adjacent to the existing highway.

3. The amount and location of the land to be used shall not impair the use of the remaining Section 4(f) land, in whole or in part, for its intended purpose. This determination is to be made by the FHWA in concurrence with the officials having jurisdiction over the Section 4(f) lands, and will be documented in relation to the size, use, and/or other characteristics deemed relevant.

The total amount of land to be acquired from any Section 4(f) site shall not exceed the values in the following Table:

Total Size of Section 4(f) Site	Maximum to be Acquired
< 10 acres	10 percent of site
10 acres - 100 acres	1 acre
> 100 acres	1 percent of site

4. The proximity impacts of the project on the remaining Section 4(f) land shall not impair the use of such land for its intended purpose. This determination is to be made by the FHWA in concurrence with the officials having jurisdiction over the Section 4(f) lands, and will be documented with regard to noise, air and water pollution, wildlife and habitat effects, aesthetic values, and/or other impacts deemed relevant.

5. The officials having jurisdiction over the Section 4(f) lands must agree, in writing, with the assessment of the impacts of the proposed project on, and the proposed mitigation for, the Section 4(f) lands.

6. For projects using land from a site purchased or improved with funds under the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act, the Federal Aid in Fish Restoration Act (Dingell-Johnson Act), the Federal Aid in Wildlife Act (Pittman-Robertson Act), or similar laws, or the lands are otherwise encumbered with a Federal interest (e.g., former Federal surplus property), coordination with the appropriate Federal agency is required to ascertain the agency's position on the land conversion or transfer. The programmatic Section 4(f) evaluation does not apply if the agency objects to the land conversion or transfer.

7. This programmatic evaluation does not apply to projects for which an environmental impact statement (EIS) is prepared, unless the use of Section 4(f) lands is discovered after the approval of the final EIS. Should any of the above criteria not be met, this programmatic Section 4(f) evaluation cannot be used, and an individual Section 4(f) evaluation rust be prepared.

Alternatives

The following alternatives avoid any use of the public park land, recreational area, or wildlife and waterfowl refuge:

1. Do nothing.
2. Improve the highway without using the adjacent public park, recreational land, or wildlife and waterfowl refuge.
3. Build an improved facility on new location without using the public park, recreation land, or wildlife or waterfowl refuge.

This list is intended to be all-inclusive. The programmatic Section 4(f) evaluation does not apply if a feasible and prudent alternative is identified that is not discussed in this document. The project record must clearly demonstrate that each of the above alternatives was fully evaluated before the FHWA Division Administrator concluded that the programmatic Section 4(f) evaluation applied to the project.

Findings

In order for this programmatic Section 4(f) evaluation to be applied to a project, each of the following findings must be supported by the circumstances, studies, and consultations on the project:

1. Do Nothing Alternative. The Do Nothing Alternative is not feasible and prudent because: (a) it would not correct existing or projected capacity deficiencies; or (b) it would not correct existing safety hazards; or (c) it would not correct existing deteriorated conditions and maintenance problems; and (d) not providing such correction would constitute a cost or community impact of extraordinary magnitude, or would result in truly unusual or unique problems, when compared with the proposed use of the Section 4(f) lands.

2. Improvement without Using the Adjacent Section 4(f) Lands. It is not feasible and prudent to avoid Section 4(f) lands by roadway design or transportation system management techniques (including, but not limited to, minor alignment shifts, changes in geometric design standards, use of retaining walls and/or other structures, and traffic diversions or other traffic management measures) because implementing such measures would result in: (a) substantial adverse community impacts to adjacent homes, businesses or other improved properties; or (b) substantially increased roadway or structure cost; or (c) unique engineering, traffic, maintenance, or safety problems; or (d) substantial adverse social, economic, or environmental impacts; or (e) the project not meeting identified transportation needs; and (f) the impacts, costs, or problems would be truly unusual or unique, or of extraordinary magnitude when compared with the proposed use of Section 4(f) lands. Flexibility in the application of American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) geometric standards should be exercised, as permitted in 23 CFR 625, during the analysis of this alternative.

3. Alternatives on New Location. It is not feasible and prudent to avoid Section 4(f) lands by constructing on new alignment because (a) the new location would not solve existing transportation, safety, or maintenance problems; or (b) the new location would result in substantial adverse social, economic, or environmental impacts (including such impacts as extensive severing of productive farmlands, displacement of a substantial number of families or businesses, serious disruption of established patterns, substantial damage to wetlands or other sensitive natural areas, or greater impacts to other Section 4(f) lands or (c) the new location would substantially increase costs or engineering difficulties (such as an inability to achieve minimum design standards, or to meet the requirements of various permitting agencies such as those involved with navigation, pollution, and the environment); and (d) such problems, impacts, costs, or difficulties would be truly unusual or unique, or of extraordinary magnitude when compared with the proposed use of Section 4(f) lands. Flexibility in the application of AASHTO geometric standards should be exercised, as permitted in 23 CFR 625, during the analysis of this alternative.

Measures to Minimize Harm

This programmatic Section 4(f) evaluation and approval may be used only for projects where the FHWA Division Administrator, in accordance with this evaluation, ensures that the proposed action includes all possible planning to minimize harm. This has occurred when the officials having jurisdiction over the Section 4(f) property have agreed, in writing, with the assessment of impacts resulting from the use of the Section 4(f) property and with the mitigation measures to be provided. Mitigation measures shall include one or more of the following:

1. Replacement of lands used with lands of reasonably equivalent usefulness and location and of at least comparable value.
2. Replacement of facilities impacted by the project including sidewalks, paths, benches, lights, trees, and other facilities.
3. Restoration and landscaping of disturbed areas.
4. Incorporation of design features (e.g., reduction in right-of-way width, modifications to the roadway section, retaining walls, curb and gutter sections, and minor alignment shifts); and habitat features (e.g., construction of new, or enhancement of existing, wetlands or other special habitat types); where necessary to reduce or minimize impacts to the Section 4(f) property. Such features should be designed in a manner that will not adversely affect the safety of the highway facility. Flexibility in the application of AASHTO geometric standards should be exercised, as permitted in 23 CFR 625, during such design.

5. Payment of the fair market value of the land and improvements taken or improvements to the remaining Section 4(f) site equal to the fair market value of the land and improvements taken.

6. Such additional or alternative mitigation measures as may be determined necessary based on consultation with, the officials having jurisdiction over the parkland, recreation area, or wildlife or waterfowl refuge.

If the project uses Section 4(f) lands that are encumbered with a Federal interest (see **Applicability**) coordination is required with the appropriate agency to ascertain what special measures to minimize harm, or other requirements, may be necessary under that agency's regulations. To the extent possible, commitments to accomplish such special measures and/or requirements shall be included in the project record.

Coordination

Each project will require coordination in the early stages of project development with the Federal, State and/or local agency officials having jurisdiction over the Section 4(f) lands. In the case of non-Federal Section 4(f) lands, the official with jurisdiction will be asked to identify any Federal encumbrances. Where such encumbrances exist coordination will be required with the Federal agency responsible for the encumbrance.

For the interests of the Department of Interior, Federal agency coordination will be initiated with the Regional Directors of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Park Service, and the Bureau of Reclamation; the State Directors of the Bureau of Land Management, and the Area Directors of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. In the case of Indian lands, there will also be coordination with appropriate Indian Tribal officials.

Before applying this programmatic evaluation to projects requiring an individual bridge permit the Division Administrator shall coordinate with the U.S. Coast Guard District Commander.

Copies of the final written analysis and determinations required under this programmatic Section 4(f) evaluation shall be provided to the officials having jurisdiction over the involved Section 4(f) area and to other parties upon request.

Approval Procedure

This programmatic Section 4(f) approval applies only after the FHWA Division Administrator has:

1. Determined that the project meets the applicability criteria set forth above;

2. Determined that all of the alternatives set forth in the Findings section have been fully evaluated;

3. Determined that the findings in this document (which conclude that there are no feasible and prudent alternatives to the use of the publicly owned public park, recreation area, or wildlife or waterfowl refuge) are clearly applicable to the project;

4. Determined that the project complies with the Measures to Minimize Harm section of this document;

5. Determined that the coordination called for in this programmatic evaluation has been successfully completed;

6. Assured that the measures to minimize harm will be incorporated in the project; and

7. Documented the project file clearly identifying the basis for the above determinations and assurances.

Issued on: 12/23/86

Approved: /Original Signed By/
Ali F. Sevin
Office of Environmental Policy
Federal Highway Administration

MONTANA DIVISION

"NATIONWIDE" *SECTION 4(f)* EVALUATION FOR MINOR IMPACTS
ON
HISTORIC SITES
EXCLUDING HISTORIC BRIDGE REPLACEMENTS

Project # BR 9025 (15), (P.M.S. C.N.#2795)

Date: August 8, 2001

Project Name: Missouri River - Craig

Location: Great Northern Railway Main Line
Site 24LC1641 in Craig
Lewis and Clark County, Montana

This proposed project would provide a new bridge across the Missouri River at Craig and construct new approaches to the bridge. The proposed work on the west approach to the bridge (known as Bridge Street in Craig) would upgrade or reconstruct the existing railroad crossing. This section of single-track railway and passing siding are associated with the former Great Northern Railway Main Line. This portion of railway was originally built in 1887 by the Montana Central Railroad, a subsidiary of the St. Paul, Minneapolis & Manitoba Railway and was part of the company's main line from Minneapolis to Helena and Butte. The route was used to transport ores from Butte and the Anaconda smelter to Great Falls for refining. The line became part of the Great Northern Railway in 1890. The Burlington Northern Railroad assumed ownership of the rail line in 1970 and the line is now operated by the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway. 24LC1641 was recorded in April 2000 and was determined eligible for listing on the NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES. A map showing the location of 24LC1641 is provided in Part V of the Environmental Assessment.

NOTE: Any response in a box requires additional information. Consult the "Nationwide" Section 4(f) Evaluation criteria.

		YES	NO
1.	Is the *4(f)* site adjacent to the existing highway?	X	☐
2.	Does the proposed project require the removal or alteration of historic structures, and/or objects? **The historic Craig Bridge (24LC129) could be removed if a party cannot be found to adopt the structure in-place. At this time, a party has approached MDT with a proposal to adopt the structure in-place**	☒	___
3.	Does the proposed project disturb or remove archaeological resources which are important to preserve in-place rather than to recover?	☐	X
4.	Is the impact on the *4(f)* site considered minor (i.e.: no effect; or no adverse effect)? **There will be no effect to 24LC1641.**	X	☐
5.	Has the STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE (SHPO) agreed in writing with the assessment of impacts, and the proposed mitigation?	X	☐
6.	Is the proposed action under an Environmental Impact Statement (E.I.S.)?	☐	X
7.	Is the proposed project on a new location? **The new centerline of the county road at the railroad crossing would be in approximately the same location.**	☐	X
8.	The Scope-of-Work for the proposed project is one of the following:	X	☐

a Improved traffic operation;
b) Safety improvements;
c) 3R;
d) **Bridge replacement on essentially the same alignment**; or
e) Addition of lanes.

NOTE: Any response in a box requires additional information. Consult the "Nationwide" Section 4(f) Evaluation criteria.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

	YES	NO
1. The "do-nothing" **ALTERNATIVE** has been evaluated, and is not considered to be feasible and prudent.	X	☐

This alternative would not improve the existing bridge that MDT considers to be structurally deficient and functionally obsolete.

	YES	NO
2. An **ALTERNATIVE** has been evaluated on the existing alignment which improves the highway without any *4(f)* impacts, and is also not considered to be feasible and prudent.	X	☐

Rehabilitating the Craig Bridge was eliminated from consideration since the rehabilitated structure would not meet provide a facility capable of accommodating two-way travel or eliminate geometric deficiencies at the crossing. Lewis and Clark County has requested that this bridge be replaced rather than rehabilitated. The County believes that continued maintenance costs in the future and the high traffic demand at Craig warrants a new bridge.

Reconstructing the bridge on the existing alignment was examined by MDT but eliminated from consideration because this alternative would require that the existing historic bridge, a NRHP-eligible site, be removed.

	YES	NO
3. An **ALTERNATIVE** on a new location avoiding the *4(f)* site has been evaluated, and is not considered to be feasible and prudent.	X	☐

The location of this project was established by the continuous use of the existing river crossing since the early 1900s. This crossing location is important to the residents and businesses in Craig. Building a river crossing far enough up or downstream to avoid the FAS would still impact the Great Northern Railway Main Line elsewhere in the Craig area.

MINIMIZATION OF HARM

	YES	NO
1. The proposed project includes all possible planning to minimize harm.	X	☐
2. Measures to minimize harm include the following:	X	☐

The proposed action would only upgrade or replace an existing crossing. The proposed work would be accomplished in a manner that would not alter the track structure or change the overall appearance of the cultural landscape of the railroad line through Craig.

COORDINATION

1. The proposed project has been **COORDINATED** with the following:

	YES	NO
a) SHPO **(May 1, 2001 and July 12, 2001)**	X	☐
b) ADVISORY COUNCIL ON HISTORIC PRESERVATION		☒
c) Property owners		X
d) Local/State/Federal agencies **MDFWP - Administrators of the Craig Fishing Access Site**	X	☐

2. One of the preceding had the following comment(s) regarding this proposed project, and/or the mitigation:
SHPO concurred with a Determination of No Effect for impacts on the Great Northern Railway Main Line (24LC1641) on July 12, 2001.

SHPO concurred with a Determination of Effect for impacts on the Craig Bridge (24LC129) on May 1, 2001.

SUMMARY

The proposed action is preferred because the No Build Alternative does not satisfy the specified purpose and need for improvements at the river crossing. The present bridge is nearly a century old and has a Sufficiency Rating of 29.6 (see Part II in the EA). MDT considers this bridge to be structurally deficient and functionally obsolete based on detailed evaluations of the structure's condition. The No Build Alternative does not meet the traveling public's needs because it does not address deficient structural conditions and the limited vertical clearance associated with the existing bridge, fails meet MDT's optimal width for two-lane roadways, and would not improve an alignment which restricts driver visibility at the river crossing.

Rehabilitating the Craig Bridge would not provide a facility capable of accommodating two-way travel or eliminate geometric deficiencies (one-way travel, height restrictions, sight distance problems) at the crossing. Rehabilitation is also not an action endorsed by the Lewis and Clark County, the owners of the bridge.

Building a new bridge slightly downstream from the present structure was the only viable alternative identified by MDT for the Missouri River crossing at Craig. Constructing a bridge on the existing alignment would require the closure of the existing bridge causing adverse economic effects on the community of Craig and this alternative would require the removal of the historic bridge. Building a new bridge immediately upstream of the existing bridge would also impact the Great Northern Railway Main Line and would severely impair the functions and use of the Craig FAS, another Section 4(f) property. Constructing a new crossing well up or downstream from the current bridge would cause extraordinary environmental impacts and/or substantially increase engineering and construction costs and would also likely require crossings of the Great Northern Railway Main Line. The reasons for making these conclusions are provided in Part III of the EA. Therefore, no feasible and prudent alternatives exist to avoid the minor "use" of land from 24LC1641.

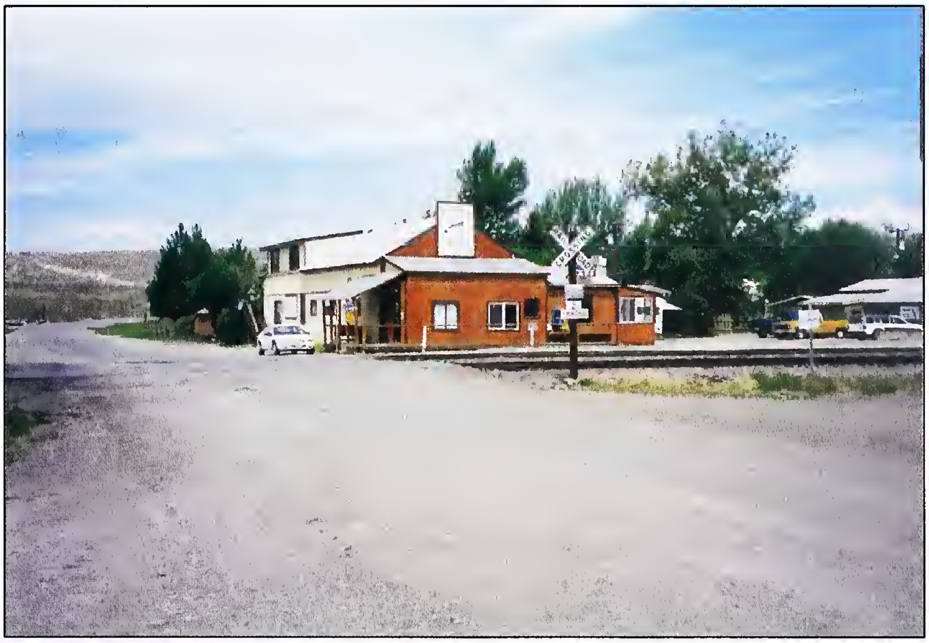
Part III of the attached Environmental Assessment describes the alternatives considered by MDT and the analysis used to identify a preferred alternative for this proposed bridge project. The proposed action meets all criteria regarding the required **Alternatives**, **Coordination**, and **Measures to Minimize Harm**. All possible planning to minimize harm to the Great Northern Railway Main Line has been undertaken and will be incorporated in this proposed project. This proposed project therefore complies with the December 23, 1986 Final Nationwide *Section 4(f)* Evaluation by the U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION's Federal Highway Administration.

APPROVAL

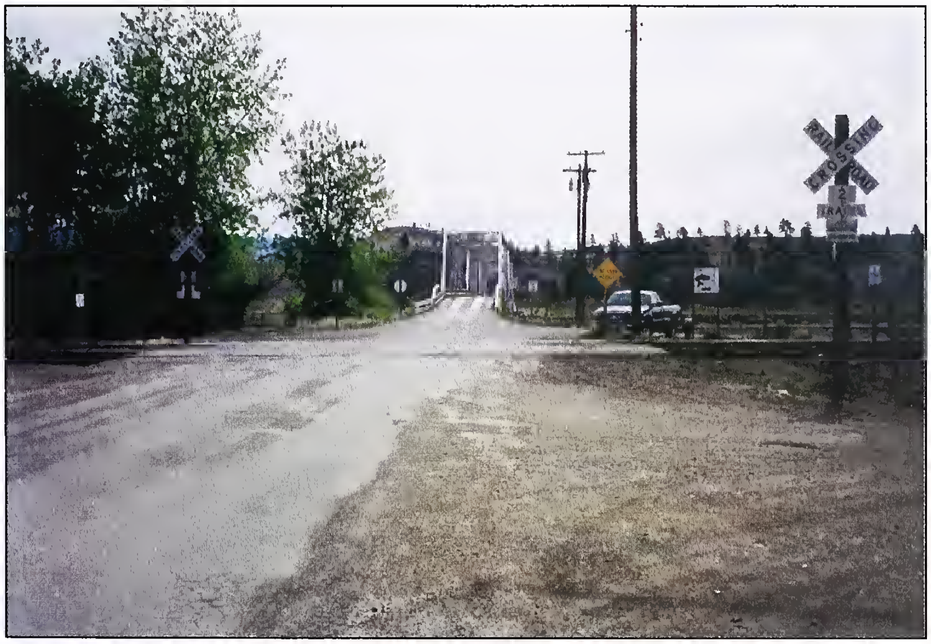
This document is submitted pursuant to **49 U.S.C. 303** and in accordance with the provisions of **16 U.S.C. 470f**.

Terry L. Yarger, P.E. Date: 8-22-01
Engineering Bureau Chief
MDT Environmental Services

Approved: Date: 8/27/01
Federal Highway Administration



Looking westward at existing railroad crossing.



Looking easterly at existing railroad crossing and Craig Bridge.

Missouri River - Craig

Photographs of Great Northern Railway Main Line 24LC1641

~~2001062803~~
2001062830

JOSEF
- MDT

Montana Department of Transportation
2701 Prospect Avenue
PO Box 201001
Helena MT 59620-1001

David A. Galt, Director
Judy Martz, Governor

MISSOURI RIVER - CRAIG: GN RAILW EFFECT

RECEIVED
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ENVIRONMENTAL

June 26, 2001

Post-it® Fax Note 7671	Date 7/19 # of pages ▸ 1
To DAN NordeRud	From Jon Axline
Co./Dept. PECCIA	Co. MDT
Phone #	Phone # 444-6258
Fax # 447-5036	Fax # 444-7245

Dr. Mark Baumler
State Historic Preservation Office
1410 8th Avenue
P.O. Box 201202
Helena, MT 59620-1202

Subject: BR 9025(15)
Missouri River – Craig
Control No. 2795

On May 1, 2001, we submitted a determination of effect for the Craig Bridge (24LC129) on the above project in Lewis & Clark County. In the document, we determined that any impact to the Great Northern Railway line (24LC1641) in Craig was covered under the terms of the Historic Railroad Grade Programmatic Agreement. Unfortunately, the grade is located in the Great Falls District, not the Butte District as originally stated. Because the grade is not included under the terms of in the PA, a Determination of Effect for Section 106 purposes is necessary.

Based on the scope of the project, we have determined that the proposed project would have **No Effect** on 24LC1641. The existing alignment of the Great Northern Railway Main Line would be perpetuated. The proposed project would only include the existing crossing; it would be upgraded or replaced. There would be not be sufficient loss of integrity to disqualify the site from the National Register as a result of this project. There would not, moreover, be a cumulative loss of integrity either as the project would include only the existing crossing. We request your concurrence.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 444-6258.

Jon Axline

Jon Axline, Historian
Environmental Services

CONCUR
MONTANA SHPO
DATE 12 July 2001 SIGNED

Enclosure

cc: Mick Johnson, Great Falls District Administrator
Joe Kolman, P.E., Bridge Engineer
Gordon Stockstad, Resources Bureau

U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration

FINAL NATIONWIDE SECTION 4(F) EVALUATION AND APPROVAL FOR FEDERALLY-AIDED HIGHWAY PROJECTS WITH MINOR INVOLVEMENTS WITH HISTORIC SITES

This programmatic Section 4(f) evaluation has been prepared for projects which improve existing highways and use minor amounts of land (including non-historic improvements thereon) from historic sites that are adjacent to existing highways. This programmatic Section 4(f) evaluation satisfies the requirements of Section 4(f) for all projects that meet the applicability criteria listed below. No individual Section 4(f) evaluations need be prepared for such projects. (Note a similar programmatic Section 4(f) evaluation has been prepared for projects which use minor amounts of publicly owned public parks, recreation lands, or wildlife and waterfowl refuges).

The FHWA Division Administrator is responsible for reviewing each individual project to determine that it meets the criteria and procedures of this programmatic Section 4(f) evaluation. The Division Administrator's determinations will be thorough and will clearly document the items that have been reviewed. The written analysis and determinations will be combined in a single document and placed in the project record and will be made available to the public upon request. This programmatic evaluation will not change the existing procedures for project compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) or with public involvement requirements.

Applicability

This programmatic Section 4(f) evaluation may be applied by FHWA only to projects meeting the following criteria:

1. The proposed project is designed to improve the operational characteristics, safety, and/or physical condition of existing highway facilities on essentially the same alignment. This includes"4R" work (resurfacing, restoration, rehabilitation and reconstruction); safety improvements, such as shoulder widening and the correction of substandard curves and intersections; traffic operation improvements, such as signalization, channelization, and turning or climbing lanes; bicycle and pedestrian facilities; bridge replacements on essentially the same alignment, and the construction of additional lanes. This programmatic Section 4(f) evaluation does not apply to the construction of a highway on a new location.

2. The historic site involved is located adjacent to the existing highway.

3. The project does not require the removal or alteration of historic buildings, structures or objects on the historic site.

4. The project does not require the disturbance or removal of archeological resources that are important to preserve in place rather than to remove for archeological research. The determination of the importance to preserve in place will be based on consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) and, if appropriate, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP).

5. The impact on the Section 4(f) site resulting from the use of the land must be considered minor. The word minor is narrowly defined as having either a "no effect" or "no adverse effect" (when applying the requirements of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and 36 CFR Part 800) on the qualities which qualified the site for listing or eligibility on the National Register of Historic Places. The ACHP must not object to the determination of "no adverse effect."

6. The SHPO must agree, in writing with the assessment of impacts of the proposed project on and the proposed mitigation for the historic sites.

7. This programmatic evaluation does not apply to projects for which an environmental impact statement (EIS) is prepared, unless the use of Section 4(f) lands is discovered after the approval of the final EIS.
Should any of the above criteria not be met, this programmatic Section 4(f) evaluation cannot be used, and an individual Section 4(f) evaluation must be prepared.

Alternatives

The following alternatives avoid any use of the historic site.

1. Do nothing.
2. Improve the highway without using the adjacent historic site.
3. Build an improved facility on new location without using the historic site.

This list is intended to be all-inclusive. The programmatic Section 4(f) evaluation does not apply if a feasible and prudent alternative is identified that is not discussed in this document. The project record must clearly demonstrate that each of the above alternatives was fully evaluated before the FHWA Division Administrator concluded that the programmatic Section 4(f) evaluation applied to the project.

Findings

In order for this programmatic Section 4(f) evaluation to be applied to a project, each of the following findings must be supported by the circumstances, studies, and consultations on the project:

1. Do Nothing Alternative The Do Nothing Alternative is not feasible and prudent because: (a) it would not correct existing or projected capacity deficiencies or; (b) it would not correct existing safety hazards; or (c) it would not correct existing deteriorated conditions and maintenance problems; and (d) not providing such correction would constitute a cost or community impact of extraordinary magnitude, or would result in truly unusual or unique problems, when compared with the proposed use of the Section 4(f) lands.

2. Improvement without Using the Adjacent Section 4(f) Lands It is not feasible and prudent to avoid Section 4(f) lands by roadway design or transportation system management techniques (including, but not limited to, minor alignment shifts, changes in geometric design standards, use of retaining walls and/or other structures, and traffic diversions or other traffic management measures) because implementing such measures would result in: (a) substantial adverse community impacts to adjacent homes, businesses or other improved

properties; or (b) substantially increased roadway or structure cost; or (c) unique engineering, traffic, maintenance, or safety problems, or (d) substantial adverse social, economic, or environmental impacts; or (e) the project not meeting identified transportation needs; and (f) the impacts, costs, or problems would be truly unusual or unique, or of extraordinary magnitude when compared with the proposed use of Section 4(f) lands. Flexibility in the application of American Association of State Highway and Transportation officials (AASHTO) geometric standards should be exercised, as permitted in 23 CFR 625, during the analysis of this alternative.

3. Alternatives on New Location It is not feasible and prudent to avoid Section 4(f) lands by constructing on new alignment because (a) the new location would not solve existing transportation safety or maintenance problems; or (b) the new location would result in substantial adverse social, economic, or environmental impacts (including such impacts as extensive severing of productive farmlands, displacement of a substantial number of families or businesses, serious disruption of established travel patterns, substantial damage to wetlands or other sensitive natural areas, or greater impacts to other Section 4(f) lands); or (c) the new location would substantially increase costs or engineering difficulties (such as an inability to achieve minimum design standards, or to meet the requirements of various permitting agencies such as those involved with navigation, pollution, and the environment); and (d) such problems, impacts, costs, or difficulties would be truly unusual or unique, or of extraordinary magnitude when compared with the proposed use of Section 4(f) lands. Flexibility in the application of AASHTO geometric standards should be exercised, as permitted in 23 CFR 625, during the analysis of this alternative.

Measures to Minimize Harm

This programmatic Section 4(f) evaluation and approval may be used only for projects where the FHWA Division Administrator, in accordance with this evaluation, ensures that the proposed action includes all possible planning to minimize harm. Measures to minimize harm will consist of those measures necessary to preserve the historic integrity of the site and agreed to, in accordance with 36 CFR Part 800 by the FHWA, the SHPO, and as appropriate, the ACHP.

Coordination

The use of this programmatic evaluation and approval is conditioned upon the satisfactory completion of coordination with the SHPO, the ACHP, and interested persons as called for in 36 CFR Part 800. Coordination with interested persons, such as the local government, the property owner, a local historical society, or an indian tribe, can facilitate in the evaluation of the historic resource values and mitigation proposals and is therefore highly encouraged.

For historic sites encumbered with Federal .interests, coordination is required with the Federal agencies responsible for the encumbrances.

Before applying this programmatic evaluation to projects requiring an individual bridge permit, the Division Administrator shall coordinate with the U.S. Coast Guard District Commander.

Approval Procedure:

This programmatic Section 4(f) approval applies only after the FHWA Division Administrator has:

1. Determined that the project meets the applicability criteria set forth above;

2. Determined that all of the alternatives set forth in the Findings section have been fully evaluated;

3. Determined that the findings in this document (which conclude that there are no feasible and prudent alternatives to the use of land from or non-historic improvements on the historic site) are clearly applicable to the project;

4. Determined that the project complies with the Measures to Minimize Harm section of this document;

5. Determined that the coordination called for in this programmatic evaluation has been successfully completed;

6. Assured that the measures to minimize harm will be incorporated in the project; and

7. Documented the project file clearly identifying the basis for the above determinations and assurances.

Issued on: 12/23/86

Approved: /Original Signed By/
Ali Sevin, Director
Office of Environmental Policy
Federal Highway Administration

Appendix E: Public Involvement

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE September 27, 1999

For further information, contact:
Michael Johnson, (406) 454-5887 or
Joan Scott, (406) 444-7307

The Montana Department of Transportation is planning to replace the bridge over the Missouri River at Craig in Lewis and Clark County.

The purpose of the project is to provide the travelling public with a new structure which meets modern standards for capacity and width.

New right-of-way will be required.

The letting date is scheduled for early 2002, depending on availability of funds and completion of design.

For more information or to comment on this proposal please contact, Michael P. Johnson, District Administrator, PO Box 1359, Great Falls MT 59407-1359, phone (406) 454-5880 or 1-888-730-0898. For the hearing impaired, the TTY number is (406) 444-7696 or 1-800-335-7592.

---END---

CN#2795
BR 9025(15)
Missouri River-Craig

[illegible]
JAN 25 2000
ROBERT PECCIA

CRAIG BRIDGE
PUBLIC MEETING

The Lewis and Clark County Board of County Commissioners invite you to attend and present your perspectives about replacing the Missouri River Bridge at Craig.

The public meeting will begin at 7:00 p.m.

BE HEARD

Your comments and concerns are a very important part of the process. For more information or to arrange special accommodations for disabilities, please call Lewis & Clark County at
(406)447-1637.

Thursday, December 9, 1999 - 7:00 p.m.
Craig School
Craig, MT

BRIDGE IN TROUBLE

Craig span may get overhaul

By KARL PUCKETT
Tribune Staff Writer

CRAIG — The deck on the long bridge here over the wide Missouri River is made mostly of boards.

The 96-year-old bridge also is just one lane, so meeting traffic has to back up.

And emergency vehicles sometimes have to take a longer way to reach fires and medical emergencies.

These are just some of the problems that are prompting both Lewis and Clark County and the state Department of Transportation to propose replacing or rebuilding the Craig bridge.

The bridge is just one of hundreds in Montana that are deficient in some way, and just one of dozens that could be overhauled thanks to a big boost in federal funding that has bridge work bustling across the state.

"That's always the county's concern: the safety, health and welfare of its citizens," said Eric Griffin, Lewis and Clark County's director of public works.

Residents of Lewis and Clark County can express their thoughts on replacing the bridge at a public hearing at 7 p.m. Thursday at the Craig School.

Options include replacing the bridge, building a new bridge but leaving the old structure standing for recreational foot traffic, fixing up the old bridge or doing nothing at all, Griffin said.

The state, which would do the work with federal dollars, would follow with an environmental assessment, and construction or rehabilitation could happen in 2002.

Not replacing the well-traveled bridge may officially be an option, according to the DOT, but not a realistic one.

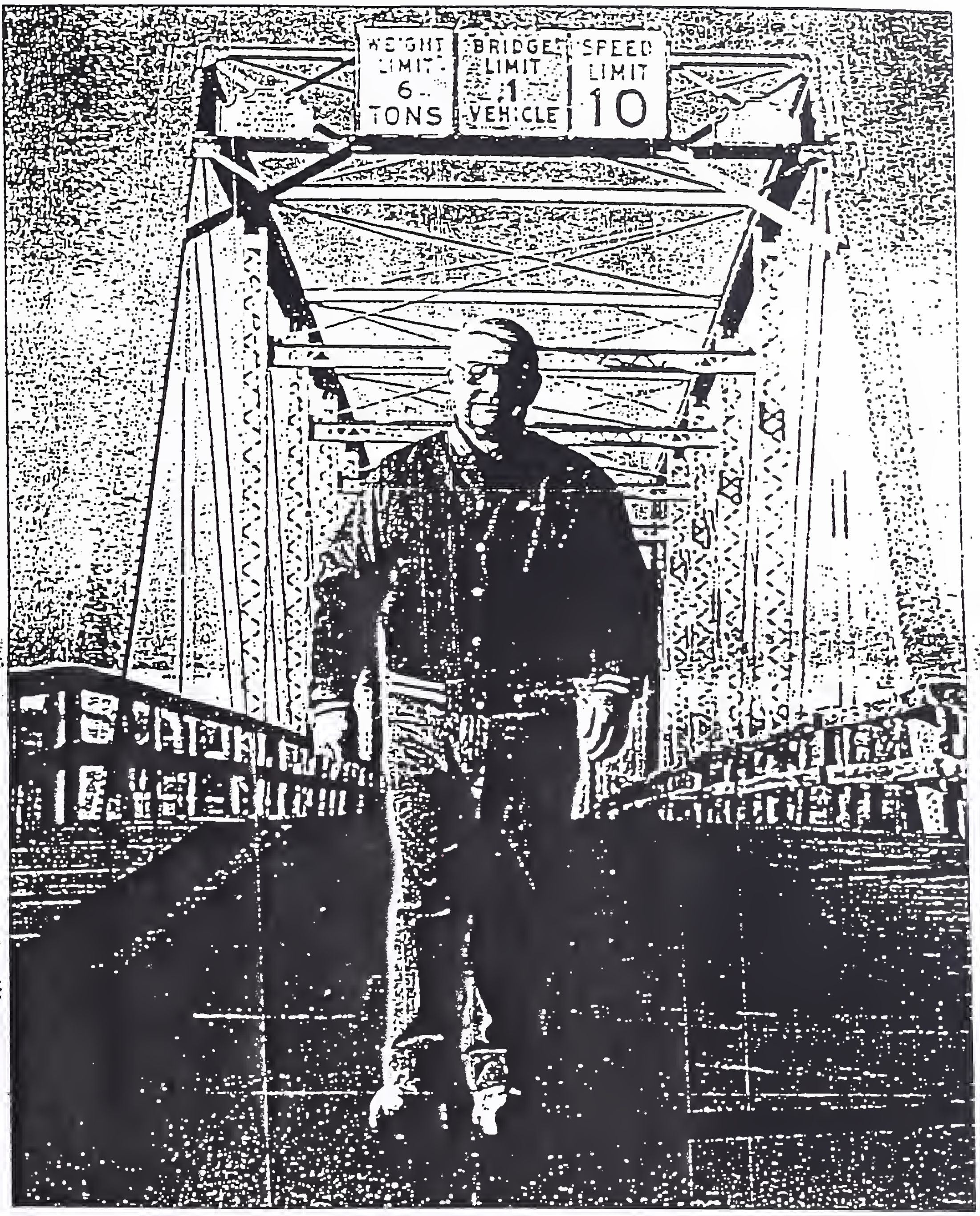
Built in 1903 by Elkhart Bridge Co. out of Elkhart, Ind., the 480-foot bridge is tricky or impossible for farm and emergency trucks trying to get from Interstate 15 and Old Highway 91.

Its 6-ton capacity is too light. And at 16.5 feet wide it's too narrow. Its low overhead also is restrictive for many vehicles.

The state inspects the 4,765 state and county bridges in the state every two years and comes up with a rating from zero to 100, with 100 being the best. Joe Kolman, a DOT bridge engineer, said he couldn't recall the specific rating for the Craig Bridge, but knew that it was poor.

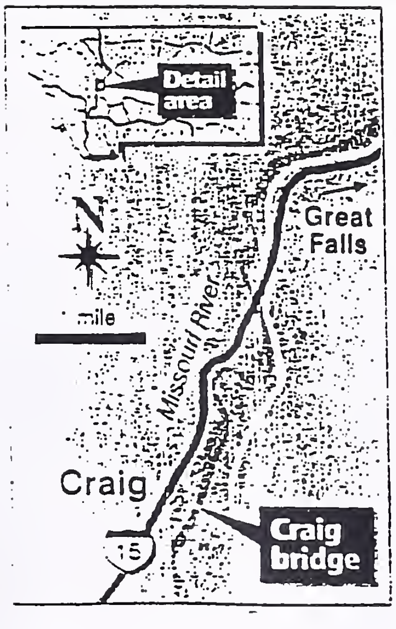
"It was low enough that it met the criteria for being replaced or being rehabbed," Kolman said.

The bridge in this tiny town about halfway be-



Tribune photo by Stuart S. White

Craig resident Pat O'Connell crosses the one-lane bridge across the Missouri River at Craig. The bridge, built in 1903, may be replaced if a state proposal is accepted.



To comment

A public meeting on replacing the Craig bridge will be held at 7 p.m. Thursday at the Craig School. Call Lewis and Clark County at (406) 447-1637

Bridge: Public meeting Thursday night in Craig

FROM 1A

tween Great Falls and Helena off I-15 is like hundreds of others in the state, according to the DOT.

Kolman said that 12.55 percent of the state's bridges are deficient. The figure increases to 30.2 percent for bridges under the jurisdiction of counties. A deficiency could mean that bridges are either structurally unsound and can't carry the load they were designed for, or functionally obsolete, meaning they're too narrow or low.

In addition, most of the county bridges average 60 years; a typical bridge life span is 75 years. State bridges aren't quite as old.

The good news about these crossings over such rivers as the Missouri, Yellowstone and Dearborn is that more money is available to fix them these days

In the most recent federal highway bill, Montana's allocation for bridges jumped from $11 million to $18 million a year. Of that, 35 percent goes to replace or fix county bridges.

As a result of the funding jump, the state is so busy fixing or planning to repair bridges that it's even giving out design work to consultants. Through 2004, DOT hopes to replace 35 bridges a year.

"We have a large number of deficient bridges, so this is really a help for the state," Kolman said.

This riverside community has about 45 year-round residents. But the population swells in the summer to 300 to 400 people because of its scenic location and opportunities for recreation. Three outfitters alone call Craig home, and there's also a trout shop along with bars, construction companies and an appliance store.

Both the full- and part-time residents rely heavily on the bridge, which connects the town of Craig and homes on the other side of the river. It's used as a shortcut to the popular Holter Lake. School buses and emergency vehicles alike regularly cross it.

"It's hard to believe how many people go across that thing," said Pat O'Connell, who used to own the convenience store in town.

O'Connell said the county and state would have to consider the impact replacing the bridge wouldn't have on businesses. Closing the bridge down for a year to fix or replace it, he said, could be hard on area commerce.

But O'Connell, who has taken an informal survey or residents, said there's been little opposition.

"Most of the people I've talked to feel that the bridge has served its purpose and feel it should be replaced," he said.

▶ CONTACT:

Managing Editor
Gary Moseman
at (406) 791-1465
or (800) 438-6600

GREAT FALLS TRIBUNE
OPINION

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Tribune editorial

It's sad, but time has come for new bridge at Craig

Grudgingly, we agree that a new bridge over the Missouri River needs to be built at Craig.

The current span was erected in 1903 and is the state's second-oldest bridge still used for vehicle traffic on a public road.

It may not be safe, and it's certainly not efficient.

It's limited to one-way traffic, and it's recommended that only one vehicle at a time cross the structure.

At 10 mph, the speed limit can be maddeningly slow. During the busy summer months, traffic can get a little backed up waiting for the next motor home or pickup truck and boat trailer to ease its way across the truss bridge.

All those factors, however, also add to the bridge's appeal.

There's a certain Montana charm to pulling off to the side of the road, waiting for the folks on the other side to pass by — usually with a friendly wave — before taking your own turn to move across.

The slow speed limit and relaxed, one-at-a-time politeness seem to fit in well with a day fishing on the river or camping up at Holter. And they've taught a couple of generations of kids — especially those from bigger towns — about simple courtesies and pleasures that aren't always apparent elsewhere.

So it's with a wistful eye to the past that we acknowledge the need for a bigger, better bridge for the future.

The people in and around Craig — for whom the charm of waiting for tourists is probably long gone — deserve a bridge that meets safety standards and that allows them to move more freely across the increasingly popular river.

At a public hearing last week, area residents agreed the time has come for a new bridge.

The only questions now are where it should be built and whether the old one should remain.

Those are critical questions and ones that locals should have a say in answering. They also should have a say in the design and appearance of the structure.

The state, however, must move quickly to take advantage of bridge construction funds from the federal government.

Expected to cost about $2.5 million, construction on the new bridge could begin in 2002.

Those who use the bridge — locals and visitors alike — should make their views and concerns heard.

In the meantime, take advantage of the rare opportunity to slow down, wait for the other rig to pass by, and share a friendly wave.

To comment

Comments about replacing the bridge at Craig will be taken until Dec. 17. They should be mailed to:

Lewis and Clark County
Public Works Department
3402 Cooney Drive
Helena, MT 59602

Craig Missouri River Bridge Project

BOCC Meeting in Craig
December 9, 1999

Issues identified at the public meeting:

- Disruption of traffic for a year, if bridge is demolished and replaced.
- Rehabilitation of existing structure? (Not feasible to meet current requirements.)
- Historical marker is important.
- Option of single-lane bridge adjacent? (Not feasible to meet current requirements.)
- Use of bridge by ranchers, recreationists, school students, and business-related traffic.
- Look at alignment options closely to avoid impacts to existing structures and property on West side of river.
- Effect on character of community? With new bridge; with no bridge (when existing fails).
- Speed of traffic through town. (Consider traffic calming measures in design.)
- Use of temporary floating bridge to provide for traffic flow, if bridge is demolished and replaced.
- Bridge should be saved due to aesthetic and historic character.
- Plan construction to minimize amount of time community would be without access across the river and to minimize adverse effect on local economy.
- Examine existing maintenance budget, future maintenance budget for new bridge, and future maintenance budget for ped bridge -- Do cost analysis to understand fiscal issues.
- Fishing off of existing bridge; would fishing off a new bridge be permitted?
- Need to act while funding available.
- New bridge should have walking lane, particularly if old bridge is removed.
- Put new bridge upstream of existing bridge.
- Definitely need new bridge; it's just a matter of where and how.
- Should try to save old bridge -- Develop fiscal understanding of maintenance and liability, then determine whether to accept, market to others, etc.
- Traffic re-route would be very disruptive.

- Some Craig residents gone south for winter and not aware of proposal.
- Comments due by 12-17 to County Public Works Dept.
- DFW&P concerned about disruption at boat ramp.
- Seasonal business activities in Craig (Summer).
- Seasonal school transportation in Craig (Winter).
- We want a new bridge; need more process to address issues of alignment, disruption, old bridge status, local economy, etc.
- Design and aesthetics of new bridge important to consider.

File: 2719 CraigBrd.mtg

LEWIS AND CLARK COUNTY

COMMENT FORM

Bridge - Missouri River - Craig

You are invited to make your comments on this form and leave it with the meeting officials or take it with you and mail it to Lewis and Clark County, Public Works Department, 3402 Cooney Drive, Helena, MT 59602.

Please indicate your name, address and affiliation (if any) below. Thank you for your interest and comments on this project. Feel free to use the back and/or additional sheets of paper if necessary.

NAME AND ADDRESS: Beverly Stiger 1555 Beartooth Rd.
Rural Mail Carrier

COMMENTS: I use the bridge daily; shutting it down for any length of time would cause rerouting the mail route — which could be done, but — my suggestion would be to leave the old bridge operational, and build the new bridge beside it on the south side. End of bridge to be where the boat ramp is. Move the boat ramp ~~down~~ up river a few feet. Deal with Sterling Ranch on east side for right of way. Then after new bridge is in place decide whether to keep the old one as a historical marker, possibly maintaining it as a walking path, fishing bridge etc. Maybe the demolition funds would cover that type of maintenance for many, many years.

LEWIS AND CLARK COUNTY

COMMENT FORM

Bridge - Missouri River - Craig

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NAME AND ADDRESS: Delbert Lemons 1411 Leonard
St, Craig, Mont.

COMMENTS: I do favor replacing The bridge. I would favor either proposal, To The North of The existing Structure, with perhaps less use of new right of way on The East end of The Bridge. I also favor removing The Old Bridge. with The shortest disruption To Traffic Flow.

LEWIS AND CLARK COUNTY

COMMENT FORM

Bridge - Missouri River - Craig

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NAME AND ADDRESS: [illegible] Anderson / Wolf Creek

COMMENTS:

Replace old bridge w/ the least impact to existing businesses and the tourist season.

There will be ↑ in tourist activities as long as the Missouri has fish & the fact that there is increasing interest in the Lewis & Clark Trail.

✓

LEWIS AND CLARK COUNTY

COMMENT FORM

Bridge - Missouri River - Craig

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NAME AND ADDRESS: Christopher M. Goodman (owner Missouri River Trout Shop)
370 Craig Main Street

COMMENTS: I believe we could have extra room for a walking lane on the North side of the new bridge. It would be nice to leave the old bridge while the new Constructio was in progress. Personaly I think we will have to remove the old one first, and put the new one in. I don't think it is a good idea to make a new county rightaway thru sterling Ranch Co. or other properties in Craig. My business can survive for one year it is the largest in Craig - It would be nice if you could aviod July 1st → November 1st Start on construction

LEWIS AND CLARK COUNTY

COMMENT FORM

Bridge - Missouri River - Craig

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NAME AND ADDRESS: Rod Bobotti.
165 Sutton Dr. Craig Mt. 59648

COMMENTS: I Believe we need a new Bridge But with owning a Buisiness in Craig, what I would like to see, is put the new Bridge od either side as long as we do not shut the old Bridge down for any tim at all. This would kill my Buisiness. I am also the fire chief, and would Like to see services kept up while the new Bridge is built.

LEWIS AND CLARK COUNTY

COMMENT FORM

Bridge - Missouri River - Craig

DEC 1 ̶ 1999

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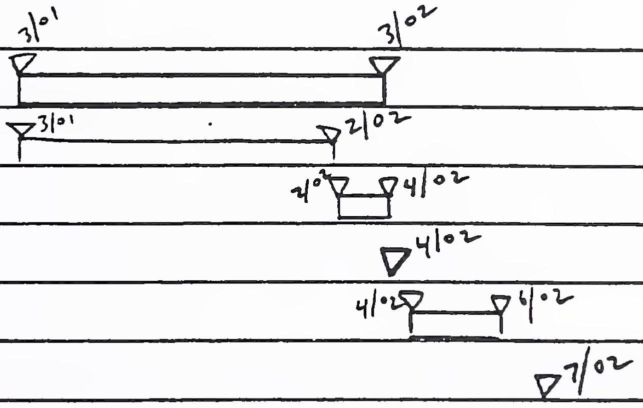
Please indicate your name, address and affiliation (if any) below. Thank you for your interest and comments on this project. Feel free to use the back and/or additional sheets of paper if necessary.

NAME AND ADDRESS: TOM C. REILLY, F.W.P.
1420 EAST 6TH AVE. HELENA MT 59620-0701

COMMENTS: IN ADDITION TO LETTER;

SCHEDULE: (EXAMPLE)

1) NEW BRIDGE CONSTRUCTION
2) EXISTING BRIDGE OPEN
* 3) " " CLOSED
4) NEW BRIDGE OPEN
5) DEMO EXISTING BRIDGE
6) PROJECT COMPLETE



Tom R. 12/10/9

unique features

Width of Bridge – Bike, Ped –

New Bridge –

Old Bridge – open until complete

Bussiness – in place, do not destroy

Softening the approaches

DEC 1 6 1999

Dec 9, 99

Lewis And Clark Public Works Department,

I'm sorry I missed the meeting At the Craig Schoolhouse thursday night.

I WAS a long time resident of the Wolf Creek And Craig AREA (sence '54') so I would Also like to make a couple of Comments.

I beleave for the Betterment of the Community That the old Bridge of Craig should be taken completely out And a new Bridge built in its place, wide enough for Two cars To pass and a side walk on each side for pedestrans And those who would simply like to Fish from the Bridge. And the more Attractive it is the more of An enhancement it will be To the little Town of Craig And it Businesses!

I Also Beleave that a large Fish Hatchery PARK (A nice Place To Vist) should be built At Josephine LAthie's Place just below the Missouri River Bridge below Holter Dam! Its a CenterAlized location To resupply Holter Lake, the Missouri River, And All the Creeks in the AREA And that Also would help The Commerse of Wolf Creek And Craig And give the good people of G.F. And Helena something more of a reason To Take the Family out for a drive on the weekends etc...

Kelly H. Waugh

452-9610

And Another Fish Hatchery Park built over At Augusta! To resupply All the Resevoirs creeks And the Sun River of that Area. And thats a centralized location, Also etc!

And I staunchly disagree with Stephen Ambrose To remove All of our Dams on the Missouri River! if Anything the Black Eagle Dam should be made better in order To be more of a place To Fish from And hang out at for G.F. residents. And All the Dams should be made To produce more electricty for Future growth.

And diverting the Traffic from Craig To Wolf Creek will give Wolf Creek a little business For a change. So that maybe some one will get excited About doing something with the old FRENchy's Restraunt And Lounge And Casino, a new Two story Hotel would Also be nice with hand heuwened sp logs And re-conditioned Cabins And a decent Trail Court or R.V. campsite with a cement holding TANK for their sewer system. (that was Always a problem For Frenchy) Plus . . .

(God Bless) And have a Merry Christmas!!!

LEWIS AND CLARK COUNTY

DEC 1 5 1999

COMMENT FORM

Bridge - Missouri River - Craig

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NAME AND ADDRESS: M. ERIC MERCHANT, 709 9th AVE #2, HELENA, MT 59601

COMMENTS:

- MAINTAIN historic bridge for the entire construction period of new bridge to allow traffic during entire process.
- AFTER construction of new bridge Maintain historic bridge as limited access right of way (bicycles/walking/etc)
  - ★ → New Bridge would need to be built a reasonable distance from historic bridge for aesthetic purposes
  - → limited access restriction would lessen maintenance costs of historic bridge

- I believe that if a new bridge is to be constructed That citizens of Lewis + Clark County Should have Some Say in The architecture of the bridge. For aesthetic purposes I don't believe That a modern 2 lane bridge, like The YORK Bridge at Hauser lake, would be appropriate.
- CRAIG IS a historic town which I personally don't think needs to change in The name of progress.

LEWIS AND CLARK COUNTY

COMMENT FORM

DEC 1[illegible] 1999

Bridge - Missouri River - Craig

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NAME AND ADDRESS: Patsy O'Connell - 140 Main St. Craig, Mt. 59648- (Homeowner-resident)

COMMENTS: I am in favor of a new bridge. Two lane. Hopefully wider than the Wolf Creek Bridge on the Missouri.

I am not in favor of saving the old bridge. Sell it. I don't have the money to keep it up.

Keep the old bridge open until absolutely necessary to close

Build new bridge on North side of old bridge.

If needed construct a new road on east side of river.

Use same road over Railroad tracks.

Leave businesses as they are.

LEWIS AND CLARK COUNTY

COMMENT FORM

DEC 1 _ 1999

Bridge - Missouri River - Craig

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NAME AND ADDRESS: Pat O'Connell
140 Main St. Craig MT 59648

COMMENTS: ① The old bridge should be used while construction on the new bridge is being done. This would keep the people who use the bridge from driving miles out of their way. ② Do not bother any of the business property on Bridge Street they have a tough time with parking as is. ③ Most everyone believe's we need a new bridge. We need some firm choices to choose from as far as location is concernd. ④ As far as the old bridge it should be removed, if monies are not available to maintain it. ⑤ Let's get on with it!

LEWIS AND CLARK COUNTY

COMMENT FORM

Bridge - Missouri River - Craig

DEC 1[illegible] 1999

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NAME AND ADDRESS: Randy & Nancy Reishus, 135 Barnes, Craig, MT 59648

Why can't the bridge be used while building the new bridge and used after the new bridge is built?

COMMENTS: We would like to see the old bridge saved as a historical sight! It represents so much of our historical past and we need to save the beauty of our state with it's historical landmarks. We would like to keep it as a useable bridge for hiking, biking, fishing, for horseback riding, etc. Since so many of Craig's business's are dependent on tourism, fisherman & recreationist, it would boast the communities economy to keep the bridge. That special quaint, rustic town is what draws them from the overcrowded populations. Please help our town by saving our bridge.

(This bridge was built the same year that the Wright brothers flew the first airplane.)

Consider the Fort Benton walking bridge and what it adds to their community.

Randy Reishus Nancy Reishus Chelsey Reishus

Shawn Reishus. Bobbie Reishus Bryan Rei

LEWIS AND CLARK COUNTY

COMMENT FORM

DEC 1 1999

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NAME AND ADDRESS: Dick Budeski - 280 Leonard ST. Craig, MT. 59648 - Resident

COMMENTS:

I agree that we do need a new bridge here in Craig. But I think the old bridge should be left in case of emergency's and for the families living on the East side of the river. Also taking the bridge out now would Bankrupt the business's here in Craig -

Also our mail carrier would have a rough time with mail deliveries - Taking the bridge out now would be a Very Great inconvienience to all -

MONTANA CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION 1971-1972
OF THE PEOPLE BY THE PEOPLE FOR THE PEOPLE

MONTANA CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION
STATE CAPITOL • HELENA, MONTANA 59601 • TELEPHONE 406/449-3750

DEC 2 _ 1999

RECEIVED
LEWIS & CLARK COUNTY COMMISSION
DEC 20 1999
BY
FILE

Eric: For your file

December 17, 1999

Lewis & Clark County Commisioners
County Court House Building
316 North Park Ave.
Helena, Montana 59601

re: Craig Bridge Comment

Dear Commisioners,

For years I have enjoyed the boating and fishing in the Craig area. Although the decision to build a new bridge is a good one, I strongly feel you should take the $60,000.00 available from the Department of Transportation and use it for maintaing a scenic foot and bicycle bridge. If the money is used to destroy the bridge and another bridge build over it, the one year of travel hardship would be substantial.

The bridge would not require significant repairs and your present county liability insurance coverage would cover the bridge with no increase in the premium you now pay.

The people of Lewis and Clark County are forunate to have such a fine example of classic bridge construction and with your vison in preserving it, the many foot and bicycle thusiastis will appreciate your good judgment for years to come.

Sincere best wishes,

Bob Campbell
601 Broadway
Helena, Montana 59601

To Lewis and Clark County, Public Works Department, 3402 Cooney Drive, Helena, MT. 59602

Concerning the Craig Bridge over the Missouri River at Craig, MT.

There is a proposal for a new bridge, but what will happen to our existing bridge? Why can' t the bridge be used while building the new bridge and used after the new bridge is built, rather than destroying it?

We would like to see the old bridge saved as a historical sight! It represents so much of our historical past and we need to save the beauty of our state with its historical landmarks. We would like to keep it as a useable bridge for hiking, fishing, biking, horseback riding, etc.

Since so many of Craig's business's are dependent on tourism, fishermen, and recreationists, it would boast the communities economy to keep the bridge. That special, quaint, rustic town is what draws them from the overcrowded populations. Consider the Fort Benton walking bridge and what it adds to their community.

Wasn't this bridge built the same year that the Wright brothers flew the first airplane?

Please help our town by saving our bridge.

Thank you,

Nancy Rawlins

Doretta Clemenger

Mar. M. Herbert

Randy Rishy

Patricia Wright

Kimberly Clark

Margaret O'Connor

June Lunde

DEC 20 1999

LEWIS AND CLARK COUNTY

DEC 2 [illegible] 1999

COMMENT FORM

Bridge - Missouri River - Craig

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Please indicate your name, address and affiliation (if any) below. Thank you for your interest and comments on this project. Feel free to use the back and/or additional sheets of paper if necessary.

NAME AND ADDRESS: Emily Lemons
62 Antelope Lane Cascade MT 59421

COMMENTS: I feel that the bridge needs to go. I used to live in Craig and spent alot a time sitting down at the river. I would always laugh when a car would get on the bridge. Down at the other end a car would get on the bridge. They would get to the middle they would get out of their cars and argue which one should back up. What i'm trying to say is Craig needs a bigger bridge. The bridge that stands there is nice and pretty. It is the one that I will remember because it has been there for so long. But it is out dated. It probably isn't that safe anymore and the upkeep

→ over

ould be too much. I think you shoul
ecide what your going to do and do it
o the businesses can plan for it. Becau
hey have worked so hard to get
tarted. I hope that you will make the
ight dicision for the Comunity. I think
e best thing to do is build a new bridg
ut during the summer is a bad time.
ecause it's a very busy time. People are going up
o the lake. They get off at Craig.

I hope you will listen

✓

LEWIS AND CLARK COUNTY

RE

DEC 1[illegible] 1999

COMMENT FORM

Bridge - Missouri River - Craig

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(3 miles from Craig
inside L&C County)

NAME AND ADDRESS: Ron Vandevender
Rt 1 South Box 2668, Cascade MT, 59421

COMMENTS: If the bridge needs to be replaced for safety Reasons, There is no question of replaceing it. I feel the new bridge could be built without taking down the old bridge, disrupting our way of life. To be cut off from the communit in which my family lives and goes to School for a period of 3 to 12 months is totally unacceptable and un-needed. It is ~~als~~ also fact, that those in power need to remember; they can be removed & replaced.

December 8, 1999

NAME and ADDRESS: Sterling Ranch Company
2929 Craig Frontage Road
Wolf Creek, MT. 59648

COMMENTS: In regard to the Project: Missouri River - Craig, Project Number: BR 9025 (15), Control Number: 2795.

We are, or will be affiliated with this project since we are the owners of the Sterling Ranch Company. The present road from the existing old bridge goes through our property.

The first existing travel across this river was by the Benjamin Stickney Ferry in the 1800's. He was our Great-grandfather, coming here in 1864, homesteading nearby, on the east side of the river, and having the first store on the west side of the river.

It has been decided that Craig needs a new bridge, and Government funds are available. A new double lane highway at the northside, adjacent to the present old bridge, coming between the two corners on the existing road east to the Frontage Road (Old Highway 91), then going just south of the now existing approach, would be prefered by the Sterling Ranch Company.

Keeping the old bridge in minimal use for the school, business's and local use till this new one is built. Then remove the old bridge, keeping one entry span restored, to be kept as Historical Monument to Craig and the State of Montana. This one span could be placed in the camp ground now ran by the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks. Some States use them in Parks, put a roof over them and rent them for party's, summer picnics, dances, or gatherings. A tourist attraction brings business.

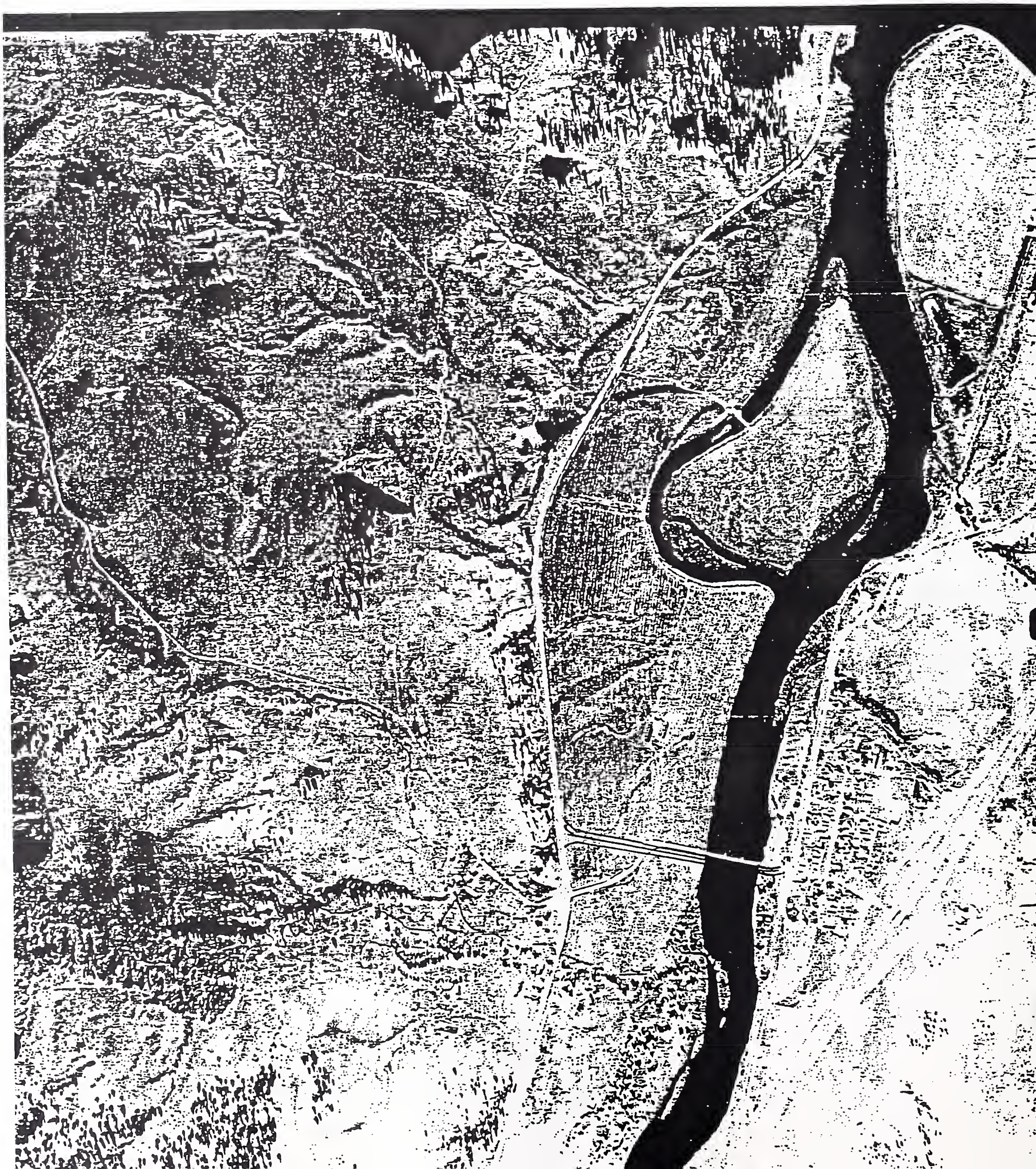
The discontinued land of the present roadway be restored back to the natural state of land conditions for the agricultural purpose. The County or State would be required to build and maintain the fences on each side of the right-of-way. This all would have to be negotiated upon with the Sterling Ranch Company.

This plan should not hurt the business in Craig as only one house may have to be taken, and the least amount of agriculture land would be used. See enclosed exhibit.

JSB/jb

E Q Sterling

Francis Sterling Frederickson



LEWIS AND CLARK COUNTY

DEC 1[illegible] 1999

COMMENT FORM

Bridge - Missouri River - Craig

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Please indicate your name, address and affiliation (if any) below. Thank you for your interest and comments on this project. Feel free to use the back and/or additional sheets of paper if necessary.

NAME AND ADDRESS: Reuben Ard, Hookers Bar + Grill
105 Bridge St. Craig Mt.

COMMENTS: I feel Craig needs a new bridge to secure the future of Craig and for the safety of the citizens. If a new bridge is installed the old bridge needs to be left in tack as long as possible to minimize the financial affect and the traveling distance for the public. I would also like to see a compromise plan for the bridge before the construction starts.

R. Ard

LEWIS AND CLARK COUNTY

RE

DEC 1 6 1999

COMMENT FORM

Bridge - Missouri River - Craig

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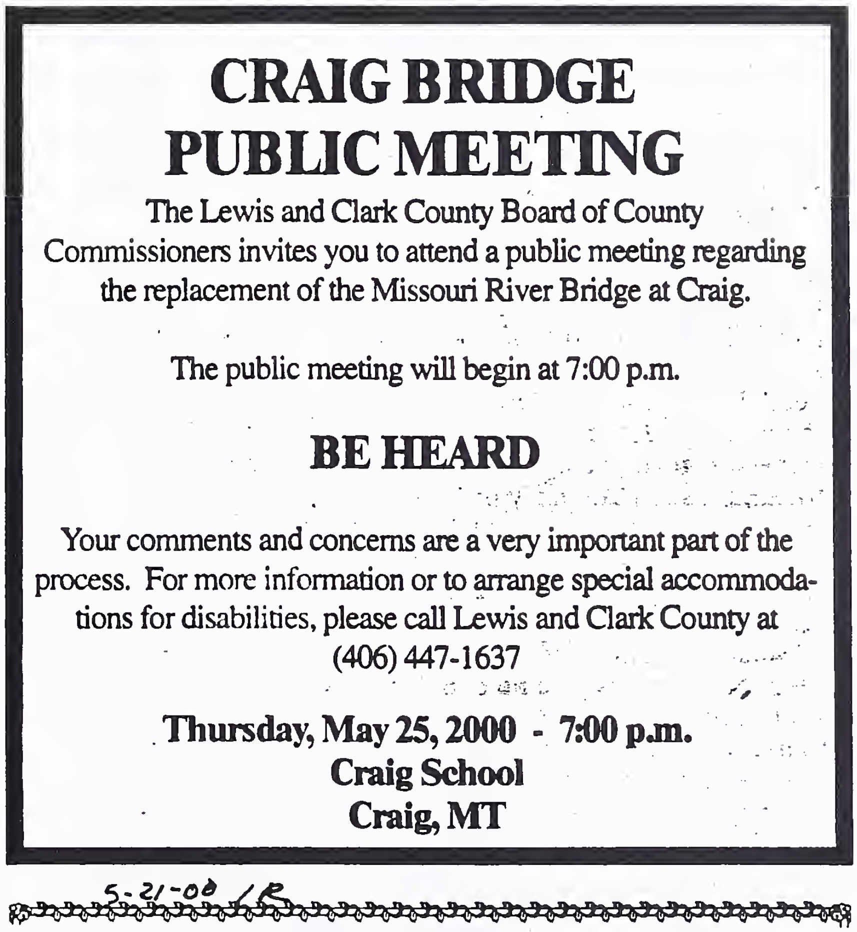
Please indicate your name, address and affiliation (if any) below. Thank you for your interest and comments on this project. Feel free to use the back and/or additional sheets of paper if necessary.

NAME AND ADDRESS: Darlene Ard (Hooker's Bar & Grill)
P.O. Box 59 Wolf Creek MT. 59648

COMMENTS: I as a resident & Business Owner I would like to see a new Bridge in Craig. Also in return I would hope that they would leave the Old Bridge up until New Bridge is complete.

Our Business ~~is~~ is my two children's future Closing for a year would do more harm than I believe good. But for the Safety of my children I would love to see a New Bridge but without hurting the business's of Craig.

Thank You,
Darlene Ard



CRAIG BRIDGE PUBLIC MEETING

The Lewis and Clark County Board of County Commissioners invites you to attend a public meeting regarding the replacement of the Missouri River Bridge at Craig.

The public meeting will begin at 7:00 p.m.

BE HEARD

Your comments and concerns are a very important part of the process. For more information or to arrange special accommodations for disabilities, please call Lewis and Clark County at (406) 447-1637

Thursday, May 25, 2000 - 7:00 p.m.
Craig School
Craig, MT

5-21-00 / R

INDEPENDENT RECOR

SATURDAY, MAY 20, 2000 ■ HELENA, MONTANA ■ VOL 56, NO. 171 ■ FIFTY CENTS

1B Newell 2nd

Helena High's Devon Newell takes 2nd at AA state golf

4B Kendall hits for cycle

Pittsburgh catcher Jason Kendall goes 4-for-5 with 5 RBI to lead Pirates over Cardinals 13-1

3A Tabi

Las Vegas jury
native, lover,

County mulls Craig bridge's fate

■ Officials leaning toward removing landmark span when new bridge is built

By **GRANT SASEK**
IR Staff Writer

A decision has been made — efforts are moving forward to construct a new bridge across the Missouri River at Craig. The question that remains is what to do with the old bridge that has spanned the river for the past 98 years.

It could stand alongside the new bridge, offering a place for pedestrian traffic and opportunities to linger above the Mighty Mo. Or, it could be torn down to remove potential liability from the backs of Lewis and Clark County taxpayers.

THE RED AND PURPLE MARKINGS indicate the proposed location of the new bridge in relation to the current site.

"If we don't remove it, we assume the liability for it," Commissioner Mike Murray warned Friday.

County officials are leaning toward tearing it down, Murray said. But, he added, there are public meetings to be held and comments to be gathered before any decision is made.

Many of those comments promise to be focused on the bridge's historical significance.

For starters, it was the second steel bridge constructed in Montana to move vehicles across the Missouri River, said Jon Axline, historian for the Montana Department of Transportation (MDOT).

The bridge also is a fine example of a type of bridge construction found throughout Montana, Axline said. And, he added, "It's just a pretty, old bridge."

The decision of whether the bridge will stand rests with the Lewis and Clark County commissioners.

"It is their bridge today and it will remain their structure," said Bob Modrow, an area bridge engineer with MDOT.

The new bridge also will become county property — even though it will be constructed with

More **BRIDGE**, *page 7A*

COMING

Check out Sunday's IR for pictures and complete res from today's Race for the

Today's schedule

Registration: 7 a.m. to 9 a
5K for women: 10:15 a.m
5K for all: 10:25 a.m.

Transfer st

Jury

Bridge

continued from 1A

federal funds funneled through MDOT.

Between $2.5 million and $3 million is available through the federal Bridge Replacement Program to fund construction of the bridge, Modrow said. Once the bridge is standing, it would become the county's property and responsibility to maintain.

The funding is available to tentatively begin construction of the bridge in 2002, Modrow said.

Plans call for being able to construct the bridge alongside the existing one if need be, Modrow said.

The existing bridge uses three main spans and two shorter ones to reach 480 feet from one bank to the other, Modrow said. It is a single lane bridge with a load limit of 8 tons. The new bridge would use four main spans to reach 500 feet across the river. It would be two lanes with a walking path and have a load limit closer to 40 tons, he said.

Plans call for locating the new bridge just downstream of the existing bridge, he said.

The problem with the existing bridge is its single lane and that drivers on one end of the bridge can't see to the other end, Modrow said. As recreational traffic continues to grow, that is becoming more of a problem, he said.

Currently, an average of 720 vehicles cross the bridge every day during the recreation season. By 2020, that number is expected to grow to 1,360, Modrow said.

Even so, Modrow agreed with Axline that the existing bridge has historical significance.

"This one is on our list of historic bridges and there is some opposition to its replacement," Modrow said.

Among possible scenarios for saving the bridge are for up for adoption.

Meeting set for Thursday

The Lewis and Clark County Commissioners are sponsoring a public meeting Thursday in Craig to discuss plans for replacing the Missouri River bridge. The meeting begins at 7 p.m. at the Craig School.

"The community of Cr could adopt it," Modrow s gested.

Perhaps, said Ron Alle Lewis and Clark County's chief administrative offic

Alles repeated Murray comments that no decision will be made on the bridge's fate until after the public has opportunities to comment. But, he added, he also agreed with Murray that officials are inclining toward removing it.

Maintenance would continue to cost the county something, but more important, Alles said, is the liability issue.

The bridge is county property, and if people were to hurt themselves on it or fall off of it, the county could be held liable, Alles said. And, he added, even if the county leases the bridge to another entity, the county would remain the final owner with the deep pockets.

An important point to remember is that county officials don't have to rush into any decision on the bridge's fate, Alles said.

The new bridge can be built with the existing bridge standing just where it is, he said.

"We'll have a fair share of public meetings on this before any decision is made," Alles promised.

Grant Sasek *can be reached at*

Public Information Meeting Summary
Missouri River - Craig
BR 9025 (15); CN 2795

Meeting Date: May 25, 2000 -- 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
Place: Craig School -- Craig, Montana

Purpose: Lewis and Clark County held this information meeting as a follow up to a meeting held on December 9, 1999. Since the previous meeting, the County and MDT have had the opportunity to analyze and discuss issues and comments brought forth by the public. This meeting provided an opportunity to address some of the issues raised regarding the bridge project and to make the public aware of MDT's progress in the development of the project. The meeting also allowed the Lewis and Clark County Commissioners and other County staff to hear comments on the future disposition of the old bridge.

Attendance: Sign-in sheets were provided by MDT. Attendance was estimated to be approximately 35 persons not including Lewis and Clark County or MDT personnel.

Meeting Summary:

The meeting convened shortly after 7:00 p.m. and was moderated by Eric Griffin, Lewis and Clark County's Director of Public Works. Griffin opened the meeting with an introduction of participants and a brief description of the purpose of the meeting. Griffin then introduced Bob Modrow, MDT's Great Falls area Bridge Engineer, who started the engineering presentation.

Modrow began with a brief history of the existing bridge and a discussion of issues brought up through past meetings. He discussed deficiencies with the current bridge, identified initial options considered for the project (rehabilitation of the existing bridge and alignment possibilities for the new structure), and presented general information about bridge designs and construction. Modrow also talked about the factors MDT used to refine initial alignment options and presented a skewed, downstream alignment for a new bridge now being considered. Modrow also addressed such issues as: speeds through Craig; the existing bridge's Sufficiency Rating; the state's Off-system Bridge Program; and issues surrounding the removal or retention of the old bridge. He then introduced Jon Axline, MDT's historian, to provide information about the department's bridge adoption program and process.

Axline briefly discussed MDT's Adopt-A-Bridge program and its associated requirements. He indicated key features of the program and discussed the ability of interested parties to adopt the bridge in-place or to remove and reuse the bridge at another location. Axline described funds available to adopting parties and that those adopting the bridge assume full liability for maintaining the bridge as a historic structure.

Dan Norderud, an environmental planner for Robert Peccia & Associates, then presented materials describing the environmental documentation requirements for the project. His presentation stated why it was necessary to prepare such documents and he discussed the type and content of the environmental document (an Environmental Assessment) being prepared for the bridge replacement project. Norderud concluded with a rundown of the anticipated schedule for completing the Environmental Assessment. He then turned the presentation over to Bob Modrow.

Modrow concluded his presentation by showing slides of several old truss bridges that have been replaced by MDT in recent years. He discussed other types of bridge designs that could be considered at Craig and elaborated on their approximate costs. Modrow presented an exhibit showing the existing bridge and photo simulations of a new structure with retention of the old bridge and of a new bridge with the existing bridge removed. He also presented a typical cross-section of the proposed bridge and charts comparing the cost of various bridge types.

Following the presentation, the meeting was opened up for a "question and answer" session, which was moderated by Eric Griffin. The public was given an opportunity to ask questions or make comments about the project and Griffin helped identify those agency representatives present that were most able to respond to the public's concerns.

Questions Raised:

Many of the questions heard focused on issues relating to the retention of the old bridge. Major questions and responses are highlighted below:

Will taxes go up as a result of constructing a new bridge? The response given to this question was no. It was pointed out that the funds for the project are 80% federal with a 20% state match. The cost of rehabilitating the bridge would not be an eligible expense under the BR program and would have to be paid for by the County.

Is the old bridge still eligible for funding if a new bridge is built? Jon Axline indicated that about $60,000 (the estimated cost of bridge demolition) would be available to whomever adopted the old bridge. If the county retained ownership, only county funds or possibly CTEP funds would be available for the structure. If a private group (foundation) were formed to adopt the bridge, CTEP funds would be the only federal/state money potentially available to such a group.

Does the County have the option of being a member of a foundation formed to adopt the bridge? Ron Alles, Chief Administrative Officer of Lewis and Clark County, indicated the County does not really want to have to raise tax dollars to maintain the old bridge. The County would be essentially responsible for two bridges at Craig and have full liability for both structures.

Can demolition money be used to purchase liability insurance policy? What is the cost of liability insurance? There was no real response provided to this question although it is assumed that the adopting party could use the money to purchase liability insurance. The adopting party would still be responsible for the costs of maintaining the structure. If the County maintained ownership, its liability insurance policy would continue to cover the old structure.

Where is money for Preconstruction Activities associated with the project coming from? Bob Modrow indicated that the funds come from the BR program.

Would an environmental document have to be done for future demolition of the old bridge? Dan Norderud explained that it would depend on the ownership situation and if there was any federal or state money involved. If a private entity or the county owned the bridge and no federal or state money were involved, an environmental document would not be needed. The demolition would be subject to permitting requirements through the Montana Department of

Fish, Wildlife & Parks, Corps of Engineers, and possibly county floodplain regulations. The EA to be written for this project would discuss the potential effects of bridge demolition if a decision were made to move or demolish the old structure. This would seem to merit little mention in the EA if the intention was to leave the structure in place since the future timing of and conditions surrounding such a demolition are unknown.

What about the sidewalk proposed for the new bridge? Bob Modrow indicated that the intention is to provide for use by pedestrians and bicyclists. The actual configuration (width of walkway) could be revised if necessary during design process depending on identified needs or desires.

What about the enforcement of speeding through Craig and railroad crossing? Eric Griffin indicated that the need for increased enforcement has been discussed with the County Sheriff. He also indicated that warrants are used to determine need for warning lights and arms at the railroad crossing.

What is the Sufficiency Rating? Bob Modrow explained the factors that are considered in the development of MDT's ratings.

Why not incorporate the old truss into a new structure or consider using a more "aesthetically pleasing" design for the new bridge? Bob Modrow fielded these questions and indicated that he had discussed this previously with Jim Range (the person asking the question). Reuse of the existing truss imposes significant design limitations for the new bridge and perpetuates some undesirable geometric conditions. Modrow discussed the "Red Bridge" project near Boulder and problems that have been encountered reusing the old truss on a new structure Bob said that it is possible to do a more elaborate design but the costs need to be weighed against total off-system bridge needs in Montana. The construction of a new Craig bridge as proposed would already consume about half of the State's total annual allocation of off-system bridge funds. Range indicated the National Trust has architects that can help with more aesthetic designs and wanted to meet with MDT and the County to discuss this issue further. MDT and County officials agreed to meet on the matter.

What does the County want to see from a group if one is formed to adopt the old bridge? Mike Griffith, County Commissioner, responded that he believed the Commission wanted to see a fairly definitive plan for how such a group would adopt and maintain the bridge. Such a group needs to show they are organized and financially able to take this on.

General Comments:

Any group formed to adopt needs to consider long-range needs for volunteers to maintain the structure.

Traffic patterns and road use will notably change if a new two-lane bridge is put in.

Consider a parallel alignment closer to the existing bridge.

The community of Fort Benton has adopted an old bridge and has had no liability claims filed against the town.

There is a considerable amount of time available for people to organize a group to adopt the bridge. Nothing would happen to the structure until the new bridge is built.

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Historic Craig Bridge

Dave Shors *IR Staff Photographer*

A FLY FISHERMAN casts his line into the Missouri River near the Craig Bridge recently.

connecting the *Past* to the *Present*

■ Craig residents, officials working on solution to save bridge

By **CAROLYNN FARLEY**
IR Staff Writer

It has spanned the Missouri River for almost a century and Craig residents told county commissioners that they want the Craig Bridge to stand for 100 years more.

About 30 citizens attended a meeting with state and county representatives at the Craig School Thursday night to determine what needs to be done to maintain the historic structure in the wake of plans to build a new bridge.

"Replacement of the Craig Bridge has been the top (bridge replacement) priority of the county for the last 10 years and the last three commissions," said Commissioner Mike Murray.

He added it would be unrealistic for the county to turn down the almost $3 million made available through the federal Bridge Replacement Program to fund the construction.

However, Murray said county commissioners also are aware they may have to make some difficult decisions

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INDEPENDENT RECORD

Bridge

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relating to the future of the bridge which was built in 1903.

The existing bridge uses three main spans and two shorter ones to reach 480 feet from one bank to the other. It is a single lane bridge with a load limit of 8 tons.

The new bridge would be constructed just downstream of the existing bridge and use four main spans to reach 500 feet across the river. It would be two lanes with a walking path and have a load limit closer to 40 tons.

If all goes as planned, construction of the bridge should begin in 2002.

For the most part, Craig residents who attended the meeting agree that a new bridge is necessary to meet growing transportation needs in the area even though one woman stormed out of the meeting stating that the existing bridge was perfectly fine.

For those residents who stayed to discuss the situation, maintaining a link with the community's history through the bridge appeared to be imperative.

One suggestion for balancing historic preservation with functionality is to leave the existing bridge standing alongside the new bridge for use by pedestrians and bicyclists.

While county officials have not made an official decision regarding what stance they will take on the preservation of the bridge, they have made it clear they have serious concerns about dumping any more money into the structure.

"We don't want to put the county in a position where the county has to come up with local tax dollars to maintain the bridge or deal with liability issues," said Ron Alles, county finance officer.

So Craig residents need to consider whether they want to form a group that will bridge, possibly through the state's Adopt-A-Bridge program.

That option presents definite financial obligations for the group that will have to be resolved before the county agrees to hand over the deed to the bridge, according to county officials.

Another possibility brought up at the meeting was that the existing bridge could be dismantled and portions of it used to make the new bridge more aesthetically pleasing.

"We want to have progress, but we don't want to have it forsaking all the benefits of having a beautiful community," said Craig resident Jim Range. Earlier in the evening, he called the modern bridges being constructed around the state, "ugly."

Range offered to work with local, state and federal officials to determine the feasibility of melding the old with the new to create a bridge that would be both functional and historic — Boulder residents used a similar method to refurbish that community's Red Bridge.

A representative from the Montana Department of Transportation told citizens he had some reservations about the plan. For example, the height restrictions that plague the existing bridge would plague the new one if the old spans were recycled.

County officials have not scheduled a date to make a decision on the fate of the historic bridge.

Commissioner Mike Griffith reassured area residents that they have at least a couple of years to organize a strategy for dealing with the old bridge — it will remain open to traffic during construction of the new bridge.

He added that area residents will have to do their homework if they want to save the structure from demolition.

"Your plan will have to be